

Fundamentals of Belief  
#21D: The Basics of the Pentecost Count

Edited Sermon Transcript  
Jon W. Brisby; 6-21-2003

Today, brethren, we're going to pick up where we left off the last time that I was here with you, on this continuation of the Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal—the sermon series that I've been going through for a number of months and years. We are covering fundamental number twenty-one on the topic of a Monday Pentecost. Let me again read that fundamental for you:

We believe that Pentecost always falls on a Monday—following a complete fifty-day count from the Sabbath occurring within the Days of Unleavened Bread. That this day pictures the receipt of God's Holy Spirit and the beginning of the New Testament Church.

That's our belief. In the first three sermons that I've done on this topic—this will be sermon number four—I've already given you the most important information that you need as a substantiation for a Monday Pentecost. It has nothing to do with being able to technically understand the count in Leviticus 23 or Deuteronomy 16. In fact, you know that we have not even turned to those passages yet. Today, we're going to turn to Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16 because we are going to get in to the technicality of the count. I know that this is somewhat difficult information. I'm going to try and make this as easy to understand as I possibly can; but even so, I know there's a limit to what I can do. It is technical material. It's the kind of material that's equivalent to the class you probably least liked in school—maybe advanced mathematics, where you would sit there and your eyes would roll back in your head as it went right over. That may be the way that many, or at least some of you, feel about the technicalities and these issues about how to count.

The thing that I still want to emphasize, brethren, is that it is not imperative that you become a scholar or a technician for counting. In the end, it is the simplicity of Christ, and the simplicity of Christ is the revelation that God gave through a chosen

servant of the last days. I've given you the history of the way that the Radio Church of God came to keep a Monday Pentecost—how it was that God revealed to him the right day, the fact that the Church kept that day for thirty-seven years until 1974, and the fact that it was divine revelation, if it was God's Church. That's where our confidence lies in knowing which day to keep. However, can we also substantiate it from the technicalities? You had better believe we can. That's what we're going to do. Now, it's going to take me a couple of sermons. This isn't going to be over today, so I'll just prepare you for that. I'm only going to get through part of it, and I'm going to try not to make it too long because I don't want to overextend your concentration capacity.

We want to focus on the part of our belief that says, "We believe that Pentecost always falls on a Monday—following a complete fifty-day count from the Sabbath occurring within the Days of Unleavened Bread." There's a lot said in those few words.

Not a single argument for a Sunday Pentecost was new at the time that the doctrinal committee began their review in the early 1970s. I've gone through that. In past sermons, I've shown you the real reasons why Pentecost was picked on by that doctrinal committee—why they wanted to change it. It was just a precursor to set the standard for moving the Church away from confidence in Mr. Armstrong's teachings, directed by God, and instead to human scholars—turning to the world's scholars for evidence to substantiate Church teaching. Pentecost was the first that was picked on. They picked on it because it was difficult to understand to begin with. There were so many contradicting interpretations of the count among many people in the world, so it was an easy mark to challenge.

But, brethren, I'm here to tell you that in spite of the fact that it was portrayed in the 1970s as new truth that had come to our knowledge for the very first time—new information we never had before which changes everything and convinces us that it should be Sunday—it was a bald-faced lie. There wasn't a single thing new about any of the information or evidence that was given. They were all arguments that had come up decades before that Mr. Raymond Cole dealt with, even at the time that Mr. Armstrong sent him out to quell the unrest that was going on in certain congregations, including in this very city, in Eugene. All the way back in the early 1950s, the Eugene and Portland congregations were part of those that had men within them who were arguing for a Sunday Pentecost. And guess

what? Their technical arguments of substantiation, or to justify those changes, were the very ones that came up in the 1970s. The difference was, in the 1950s, there was no way that Mr. Armstrong was going to allow that change. He knew it was Monday, and he knew it by divine revelation. By the 1970s, the atmosphere was very different. Mr. Armstrong was very old. He did not have the support network that had existed before, and he became vulnerable to those who were lobbying for, demanding, this change—including his very own son.

All of those arguments had been heard and rejected in the past decades. But how can we count Pentecost and have absolute confidence in that original revelation? Well, I'm going to go through it today. Those of you who have the type of orientation in mind, physically, in order to be able to understand certain technicalities, I'm going to give you the substantiation. If you can't, don't worry about it. But we do have the evidence, and I am willing to stand up and to clarify that to anybody. I'm not afraid to talk with anybody—I don't care who they are—about the technicalities of a Monday Pentecost. I think I can hold my own with this material. Not to my credit—I learned it at age nineteen from studying the material, the articles, of Church of God, The Eternal. I was a young student who had just come out of Ambassador College after attending for one year. That's where I learned it, so I'm not telling you anything today that I came up with myself. I was a student who learned these things.

When we talk about the technicalities of the count, the best way for me to put this in a very simple format is to explain the building blocks of counting. For any count, whatever it is, there are four basic elements. These are the key things that we're going to keep in mind as we go through, which will give the guidance and structure in explaining the Pentecost count. What are the four building blocks of any counting scheme?

1) You have to know where you're starting. You have to have a beginning point, do you not? If you're going to count from one point to another, you're going to have to know where you are beginning. So, point one is a start day because when we're talking about counting Pentecost, we're talking about counting days. So, for counting days from one point to another, ending with the celebration of a Holy Day that God has set apart, we've got to know where we're starting. As you're going to find out, a lot of the debate over when to keep Pentecost comes from different ideas about when the start date should be. That's one of the

distinctions that people have. So we have to have a start date. What else do we need?

2) We need to agree on the number of days being counted. That seems pretty simple, doesn't it? Is it a fifty count, a forty-nine count, a forty-eight count, or a twenty count? How many days are we counting? That's point number two. You've got to have a start date, and you've got to have a stated number of days that you're going to count. What else do we need? There are two other elements that are interrelated.

3) If you're going to count, you've got to know, is the first day included or excluded from the count? Now, this is where your eyes are going to start to roll back in your head because when you start counting inclusively and exclusively, you start to lose a lot of people.

What are we talking about when we're talking about inclusive or exclusive? Okay, you know what the word "exclusive" means, right? If a country club is exclusive, it means it only allows its members to come in. No one else can come in. They're excluded; they're kept out. They're set aside. Now, if a club is inclusive, it means that it's open to everyone who wants to come in—they are a part of it. The club doesn't keep anybody out. They let people in. So, you basically understand what inclusive and exclusive means when we use it in language that way. In counting, it has the same relevance. With counting, though, we're talking about whether the first day is included or excluded—whether it's part of, or not part of, the actual count.

4) Part four is the last day of the count. Is the last day included or excluded when you're counting? How do you know when to end?

Genesis 1, verse 5. This is the evidence that we use to substantiate what a day is. We have to go all the way back to the very basics because, believe it or not, there are all kinds of former ministers who came out of our parent organization, who are now debating what a day is and when God counts a day. When do we count it? "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." How did Mr. Armstrong interpret that? A day begins at sunset. A day, according to God's reckoning, starts with the dark portion and ends with the light portion—unlike what the Egyptians and the

Romans did. The Egyptians started their day at midnight, which is followed by the Roman calendar that we use today and with which we're familiar. We know that a new day, according to our secular calendar, starts at midnight. That's not the way God counts time at all. A day according to God, begins when the sun goes down. It's the setting of the sun, wherever you are, that marks the end of one day and the beginning of another day. So, the dark portion is the first part of that day. When the sun comes up the next morning, that's the light portion. That light portion, beginning with the morning, then, goes all the way around and ends at the following sunset. And so, as we were taught, the evening and the morning were the first day. God's definition of a day is from sunset to sunset.

Now, I could spend a lot more time on that, and I'm not going to do it. But I'll just tell you that there are men out there—I've seen some things written recently—who are trying to convince everyone that a day begins in the morning. I'm willing to tell you, brethren, that anything you can conceivably think of, as far as a perversion or a counter-doctrine, is being taught out there by people who used to believe and practice what you do. If Mr. Armstrong originally said "black," someone is going to come up with a paper to say "white." If he said "yes," they're going to say "no," or vice versa. Whatever Mr. Armstrong taught originally, there is somebody who has come up with something to counter it. And they are all preaching out of the Bible. They are all using their Biblical references to substantiate what they're doing. Obviously, we can't spend the time to address every single facet of it, so all I can do is stick to the trunk of the tree, as Mr. Armstrong would say, and give you the basics. But we are going to assume confidently that a day is the night and day portion from sundown to sundown.

Okay, counting: Here's the difficulty with counting and where confusion can come up. I always use a couple of examples. About three years ago when I did a series on the Pentecost count, I used this example. When you make your hotel reservations for the Feast of Tabernacles, you've probably run into this. You call the hotel, and you give them the dates. You say, "This is when I'm going to be there. I'm going to be there from Friday through the following Sunday." If you just tell them what days you're going to be there, is it as easy as that for them to write down? No. Why? Are you telling them the day you're arriving, or are you telling them the first night that you're going to stay? And when are you leaving? If you give them the last date that you're going to be there, is that the date you're checking out, or is that the date of the last night that you're staying? Have you ever run into a

problem because there was confusion about how you were counting the days that you were going to be there, and they shorted you one because they thought you were checking out a day early? Have you ever had that happen? Guess what? That's the same confusion that there is around counting Pentecost.

It has to do with knowing what to do with the first day of a count. Is it included or excluded? And is the last day of the count included or excluded? Where does it fall? That's why we must know the start date, the number of days in the count, whether that first day is included or excluded, and whether the last day is included or excluded. Those are the four points that we have to know. Now, when we nail those down, and we have answers to all four of those pieces, then we can put them together, and we'll know how to count Pentecost correctly.

Another example: a children's foot race. Did you ever do this as a kid, like I did? Maybe it was just the boys that were into the ego thing. We always had to race. Who could run the fastest—that was kind of the measure of who was the toughest or the "baddest" kid. If you could run fast, that gave you lots of points. And so, we were always doing our macho stuff, having our foot races. We would say, "Okay, we're going to start here; we're going to run down around that tree, and the first one back here wins." "Okay, how are we going to race?" "On the count of three: one, two . . ." "Wait a minute, wait a minute. Is it on three? Or is it one, two, three, go?" Did you ever have that debate? Is it on three, or is it one, two, three, and then go?

That's another issue about inclusive or exclusive counting. Inclusive would be one, two, three, go. Exclusive means you go on three. It means the three is not included in the final count. When three comes, the count is over and you go. That's an exclusive count. Inclusive counting means you have to count one, two, three, and only after the three is finished, you go. It's really like going on four. That's an inclusive count. Number three has to be counted all the way before you go. Exclusive means you go on three. One, two, and on three, you're off. That's what we're talking about when we're talking about figuring out how to count Pentecost, and why people come up with different dates and days of the week based upon when they start, how many days they count, and whether they include or exclude the first and last day of the count. That, in a nutshell, is what we're dealing with and what we're going to try and resolve.

What are some samples of the different counting schemes that have been used historically for determining Pentecost? Well, I want to go through at least a synopsis. You're not going to remember all of these. I've done this in chart form in the past, which I think we still have in the Church office, but basically, historically, the ones that we know of were from two schools of Jewish leaders in the Jewish thought—the Pharisees and the Sadducees, with whom you're familiar from the New Testament and Christ dealing with them.

The Sadducees, of course, controlled the temple, and were primarily made up of the priests and many of the wealthy scribes. In controlling the temple worship, they had control over when the offerings were made at the temple. So the Sadducees had their way of calculating Pentecost. What was the other one? The Pharisees. They were a competing sect of the Jews, and they had their own, different way of counting Pentecost. What was the difference, primarily, between those two counts? The Pharisees picked a different start day than the Sadducees. The Pharisees said that Pentecost should be counted from the high day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, whereas the Sadducees counted from the weekly Sabbath that fell within the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Now, what's going to happen if you start your count differently, even if all the other parts are the same? Even if you count the same number of days, even if you are consistent in either inclusive or exclusive counting, what happens if your start day is different? Are you going to wind up on the same day? No way. If you don't have the same start day, you won't end up in the same place. The Pharisees counted from the annual Holy Day, which turned out to be Nisan 16 because the Holy Day is always on Nisan 15—the fifteenth day of the first month, the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Let's turn to Leviticus 23. Now we're actually going to read the command of God concerning the count of Pentecost, and then I'll go back and try to fill in some of the differences in interpretations of the Pharisees and the Sadducees—also, then, what the Church originally taught, meaning what Mr. Armstrong originally taught, how he counted, and then what was the revised way of counting that came in 1974, and I'll try to describe the differences. But let's start by reading Leviticus 23 and verse 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: And he shall wave the sheaf before the [Eternal], to be accepted for you [When was this to be done?]: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

So, now, we have a Sabbath. We don't know yet what Sabbath it is, but there is some Sabbath that is a mark in time. And we're talking about the morrow after—so we're talking about a day that follows the Sabbath—and then something special is supposed to happen on this day.

. . . he shall wave the sheaf before the [Eternal], to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the [Eternal]. [We're going to find out that this he lamb—this young, little male lamb—represented Jesus Christ.] And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the [Eternal] for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. 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.

Here we have a command for a special Holy Day that was going to come as a result of a count starting from this, what we call, wave-sheaf day. The question is, now, how do we peg and determine when that counting starts? What Sabbath is our reference point? Is it an annual Sabbath? Was this the first day of Unleavened Bread that was our mark in time? The first day of Unleavened Bread can fall on different days of the week, but it always falls on the same calendar date. On the Hebrew calendar, it is Nisan 15. Is that the Sabbath that's being talked about, or is this a weekly Sabbath? A weekly Sabbath is always the seventh day of the week, but can fall on multiple calendar dates of the yearly calendar.

Continuing in verse 15, we're going to get our specific instructions, and the next two verses—verses 15 and 16—are where we're going to focus. Verse 15:

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath . . ."—repeating what we saw up in verse number 11.

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering . . .

Now, how many days are we going to count? That's the next thing. Here, God is miraculously recording and specifying information that tells us the start date. Remember, that was the first piece that we said we needed in order to be able to do a count. We need a start date. Okay, He's pegging the start date. ". . . ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath . . ." So if we can figure out which morrow that is, then we'll know when our start date is. ". . . from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete."

Believe it or not, there is major controversy over what this means. Does this mean seven Saturdays, or does this mean seven weeks? Well, the reality is, this word for "sabbath" here is the very same word used to denote the weekly Sabbath. It is *shabbat*. It means the Sabbath. It does not mean week. So it is telling you that seven Sabbaths, or seven Saturdays, are going to be included in the days that are counted. Is this telling us how many days to count yet? No. It's only telling you that there will be seven Saturdays included in the number of days counted.

. . . from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete [Now verse 16.]: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days . . .

How many days are we going to count? Fifty days. Here's where God tells us specifically. He has told us what the start date is (and we still have to determine exactly what it is). We have to interpret and clarify it. And He has now told us how many days. So He has given us part two of our equation. We know the start date, or we know how to figure it, and we also know that we have a command to count fifty days.

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

So, after this fifty-day count, then there is a solemn Holy Day that is kept, which we know is the Day of Pentecost. How many days are to be counted? We know that here in Leviticus 23, it's a fifty-day count. For just a little bit more clarity, this word "sabbath" in the phrase, "seven sabbaths shall be complete," is the word *shabbat*. It means "the Sabbath." It does not mean a week. Why is that important?

Well, the Jews today are the continuation of the Pharisee school of thought. What you see in modern Judaism is a carrying forward of the Pharisee sect. Now, they keep Pentecost on Sivan 6, which is the sixth day of the third month on the Hebrew calendar. Why do they keep it on a statutory, yearly date? Because they have selected the first day of Unleavened Bread as this "sabbath" to start from. Now, that Sabbath is the fifteenth of Nisan every year. The first day of Unleavened Bread is always the fifteenth day of the first month, isn't it? The day they count from as day one is the morrow after that Sabbath, which is the sixteenth of Nisan. Now, if you count fifty days from the same calendric date every year, you're always going to come out on the same calendric date, are you not? Well, it happens to be that it's really forty-nine days. I'll mention that a little bit later. A forty-nine or fifty-day count from Nisan 16 always ends on Sivan 6. Sivan is the third month of the year, according to the Hebrew calendar. Sivan 6, as I've mentioned to you a few sermons back in talking about the history of Mr. Armstrong's coming to understand a Monday Pentecost, can fall on four different days of the week. So, in that case, if you count from a calendric day, you're going to potentially be keeping Pentecost on one of four different days every single year.

How did that differ from what the Sadducees did? The Sadducees interpreted—and correctly—that the "sabbath" being referred to here is not the annual high day of the first day of Unleavened Bread, but it is the weekly Sabbath which falls within the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, they're not counting from a calendar date every year. The calendar date of wavesheaf day to them varies from year to year, which means, obviously, that their fifty-day count is going to come out on a different calendar date, but always on the same day of the week. When you count from a Sunday, and you count forty-nine or fifty days every single year, you're always going to come out on the same day of the week. So, the Sadducees kept Sunday. Why did they do that? As you're going to find out, they started with the right day, but they did not appropriately count inclusively. The inclusive or exclusive count, parts three and four of our formula, determines

what day you end up keeping. They started with the right start date, but they messed it up at the end of the count, and kept Sunday. I'm going to prove all of that.

So the Pharisees keep Sivan 6; the Sadducees argued for Sunday. Now, it's impossible to know, from the secular historical references that we have, exactly what happened at the time of Christ and the time of the temple worship. There is no accurate data or historical reference that goes back to that time. Everything that was written about what happened, was written by rabbis in the second and third centuries. How accurate would it be if you wrote today about what happened 200 years ago with the founding of the United States? Assuming that there were no historical writings preserved from that time, would you be in a good position 200 years later to write about what took place? It wouldn't be very accurate or reliable, would it? That, in essence, is what we have. We have the Talmud, the Mishna, and all of these different parts of the Jewish writings that have come down. You're speaking of slanted material that cannot be relied upon for telling us precisely what happened 100 to 300 years prior. We have the writings of Josephus. That's probably the nearest, as far as the contemporary man, and yet he was politically motivated. If you want more details on this topic of Pentecost, our articles will show you the difficulties with Josephus. His earlier writings don't emphasize the Pharisees; but when the Pharisees gained ascendancy after the destruction of the temple, all of a sudden you find that Josephus is now claiming to be a Pharisee and is touting with the Pharisees. That's very politically motivated, so we have to take with a grain of salt even the things that Josephus says.

And so, it's hard to understand and to interpret precisely everything that occurred, but we do know that at the time of Christ, these separate schools of Jewish thought had a contention over Pentecost. How were they actually keeping it? We don't know. There are those of our former affiliation who argue today that we should be keeping Sivan 6 for Pentecost. They believe we should be accepting what the Pharisees, as the modern-day Jews of that time, were teaching because Christ said that they sit in Moses' seat, and therefore, we're supposed to follow them as caretakers of the law. Not true. The Pharisees leaned unto their own interpretation, which Christ vehemently accused them over. He said that we were not to follow those things when they departed from God's Law. They did sit in Moses' seat—meaning they had authority, which Christ had not removed at the time—and so they were to be respected for the office that they held, but we were not to follow them as they erred from teaching the Truth of God.

This issue of weeks became important in order to justify a Sivan 6 Pentecost. Even some of our reference works are slanted toward the Jewish custom of Sivan 6 for Pentecost, and interpreting Leviticus 23, verses 15 and 16, according to this Jewish custom. Even in this *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Gesenius, it incorrectly says that this word "sabbath" can mean "perhaps a week." There's no evidence of that in the Bible at all. This "sabbath" referred to as the starting point is *shabbat*, and *shabbat* always means the weekly Sabbath. There is no indication, not a single example in the entire Old Testament in the Hebrew, where the use of the word *shabbat* means a week. It means the weekly Sabbath—the seventh day of the week—and that's the only thing it means. We feel absolutely confident in interpreting that the Sabbath we're supposed to count from is a weekly Sabbath, not the high Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread. I'm going to get into a little more proof of that in just a minute, but I'm going to put that on the shelf for now.

The next thing I want to emphasize is the way Mr. Armstrong counted. We've read Leviticus 23:15 and 16. We've seen just a few of the initial starting points that we need to resolve. How was it that Mr. Armstrong interpreted this text? How did he come to keep a Monday Pentecost? Was he a Hebrew scholar? Did he analyze the words involved? Not at all. Remember, I already gave you this earlier. Mr. Armstrong became compelled in mind that Pentecost could not be on a Sunday. Did he have any evidence for that, when this compelling feeling came over him? No. Was it because he read and studied the Hebrew, and interpreted these texts, and that's what led him to believe it couldn't be Sunday? No. He started with a strong feeling that God would not have started His New Testament Church on Satan's pagan day of worship, which is Sunday.

So I admit from the very beginning that if you want to say Mr. Armstrong was slanted—that he was already an answer in search of a question—that's exactly true. He started with the end in mind. Now, he may not have known it was Monday, but he had already ruled out Sunday. He would never pass the test of using the scientific method—of being totally objective—because, in that regard, you can say Mr. Armstrong wasn't objective. But let me put it to you this way: If God is inspiring a particular human being's mind to understand a spiritual truth, is that something that can be explained by man's scientific method? No, it cannot. In fact, it will look absolutely foolish to the wisdom of the world. We believe that God is the One who inspired and led Herbert Armstrong so that he wasn't going to

make mistakes according to his own human weaknesses. God was going to make sure that He put Truth in the Church. There wouldn't be a mistake in assigning the Day of Pentecost. One of the ways God did that was that He started by giving Mr. Armstrong a compelling feeling, through the Holy Spirit, that Pentecost could not be on Sunday, which is why the Church didn't keep Sivan 6 in 1937, because it would have fallen on Sunday that year. Instead, it was kept on Monday for the first time.

He knew it couldn't be Sunday; therefore, he set about the task of evaluating and studying and having God lead him to show him what day it was supposed to be. If it wasn't going to be Sunday, what day was it? How did Mr. Armstrong count? Mr. Armstrong read the *King James* English—the text here, in verse 15, that says, ". . . ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath . . ." One, he knew that was the weekly Sabbath, not an annual Sabbath. He also knew that it was a weekly Sabbath within the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is seven days long. How many weekly Sabbaths will fall in any seven-day period? Only one. You see, that's how easy it is. If you know when the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread is, and you find the one weekly Sabbath that falls in that seven-day period, that's your mark in time. That's going to help peg where we're going to start this count. He knew it was to be counted from the day following that weekly Sabbath.

. . . 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.

Now, how did he count—inclusively or exclusively? Mr. Armstrong counted exclusively. What does that mean? He read this word "from" in the English, and he said, "Well, I know how to count 'from.'" If you count from Sunday—which is the day he's going to start, the day after the weekly Sabbath—one day from Sunday is what? Monday. From one day to the next is one day. So he counted from Sunday to Monday, and that was one. In essence, it's counting Monday as day one. According to official counting, he's starting on Sunday.

I've used this example as well: You're playing hopscotch, and you've got squares drawn on the concrete, and the object is to keep your feet within the squares and to jump from one square to the other. So pretend, now, that you're

standing in a square, and that square is labeled Sunday. The next square in front of you that you're going to jump to is Monday, and it goes all the way out. There are fifty of them because we're counting fifty days. Now, if you're starting in this square labeled Sunday, and you leap forward and land in the next square, and you say, "One!"—one leap forward. That's number one. Then the second leap forward is number two. That's an exclusive count. Why? Because you didn't start by counting the square you were standing in as number one. You didn't count until you jumped to the next day, and then you said, "One." Does that make sense? That's what exclusive counting is. It means that you're really excluding the day you're starting with. So, the day that your feet are standing on, which is Sunday, you're not really counting, because you're leaping forward to the next day before you say, "One." It's called an exclusive count because the first day is really not part of the count. It's your starting point, but it's not the one you call, "One."

Now, what did Mr. Armstrong do? He used that exclusive method, which is how he interpreted the English word that means "from." If you count from one day to the next, then Monday is one. One day from Sunday is Monday, and that's one. If you do that all the way around, then forty-eight days from Sunday, according to an exclusive count, is the weekly Sabbath. Forty-nine days is a Sunday, and the fiftieth day of an exclusive count is Monday. He also counted exclusively on the end. What does that mean? The last day, fifty, he did not consider it having to be completed. He actually kept the fiftieth day. That means that day fifty was also excluded from the actual counting. Basically, you count forty-nine, and then you keep fifty. He kept number fifty. That's how he did it. How did he come up with that?

Well, he gave this example in past writings, including, I think, the old booklet, *Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days, Which?* He said that he went to the bank, and he actually asked the bankers, "Now, how do you count 'from'?"—like for calculating a loan. If you go down to the bank and you take out a loan, when is that loan one day old? Is it immediate? Do you owe interest for a day as soon as you take it out today? No. You see, in banking terms, the loan is not one day old until the following day. You don't owe them interest on that loan until one day is past. If you take out a loan for fifty days, when is the loan due? That's how Mr. Armstrong was thinking. They even showed him a bank machine that calculated it out. How did it work? If you put in the loan on Sunday and you count a fifty-day loan, guess when the loan is due? On Monday. That's how Mr. Armstrong

confirmed it to himself, according to rules of counting. It is an English count. It's technically called an exclusive count.

Is that the same way that the technical Hebrew is counted? Is that the way counting is down in the Hebrew? The answer is no. Does that mean that when we count in the Hebrew, we're going to come up with a day other than Monday? No. Guess what? When you follow the proper rules of counting in Hebrew, you're going to come out with the very same day, even though Mr. Armstrong did it with a totally non-Biblical method—not based upon history or the scholastic ability of our worldly scholars. He used his simplistic reading of the *King James* English, not the Hebrew, and sought advice on counting from a bank. Guess what? He came out with the right day.

Now, it was either totally coincidental, or just maybe it was divine revelation. We each have to decide what we think it was. I know and I'm absolutely confident that it was God guiding him. Even through his simplistic thinking and not being familiar with the Hebrew language, God brought him to the right day. But do you understand why that opened up the possibility years later for so many scholarly-minded people in the Church to challenge him? That method was not consistent with the Hebrew enumeration rule—the way to count in the Hebrew; and therefore, all kinds of people challenged him on his Biblical scholarship and accuracy. That's why Pentecost became such a debatable point in decades past. And yet, Mr. Armstrong was convinced that God was the One who inspired him to understand the right day through that very simple method, and he became absolutely compelled that God's Holy Day of Pentecost was on a Monday.

Now, I'm telling you, what's most phenomenal is that when you understand the right way to count in Hebrew, you're also going to come up with a Monday. We can stand toe-to-toe with anyone and successfully debate the merits of the Hebrew scholarship because, guess what? Accurate scholarship supports divine revelation. It does, and you're going to see that. But this is Leviticus 23—a fifty-day count. Is that the only count given in the Bible? I'm not getting into the technicalities; I'm just kind of giving you the building blocks at this point. I want you to kind of try to assimilate these pieces, but not force you to put them all together yet. Is this the only count that God gave in order to point to His Holy Day of Pentecost? No. There's another count, and it's found in Deuteronomy chapter 16. So let's turn there. You might think that this is going to confuse it even more.

Deuteronomy 16 and verse 9—here's another command:

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.

Now, here is a totally different form of language being used as an instruction for counting Pentecost. Is this the same count as we just read about in Leviticus 23? No, it is not. How many days are we counting in this particular count? Is it a fifty-day count? No. "Seven weeks . . ." Now, this is not the word "sabbath." It doesn't say, "Seven sabbaths shall you number." This is the Hebrew word *shabua*, and that word means "week." It means any seven-day period—a series of seven days on the calendar. It means a week.

Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from [This is telling us our start point.] such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.

When is that? We know that this command on wavesheaf Sunday was to put the sickle to the corn. You had to cut a small sheaf off in order to take it up to the priest on that day. But is that what it's referring to, or is it referring to the time when you really begin to put the sickle to the corn in full measure, meaning you're really going to carry out the full harvest? That's what we don't know for sure yet, but we're going to be able to determine it. Verse 10:

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

So, we find here that this day that we're calling Pentecost, is really named the Feast of Weeks. It's referring to this count of seven weeks. How many days are we going to count in Deuteronomy 16? Did you see a reference to fifty anywhere? I didn't. In this command, we have a count of forty-nine days. Leviticus 23 tells us specifically to number fifty days. But here, the command says, "Seven weeks shalt thou number . . ." So we have two different counting schemes that God has provided. They both obviously end on the same day, do they not? God didn't do anything confusing so that you have one count end on one day and another count

end on another day. The one assumption we can make from the very beginning is that they both end on the same Holy Day. Now, if you have a fifty-day count and a forty-nine-day count, and both of those counts end on the same day, what must be true? Can the start day be the same? If a count of fifty and a count of forty-nine both end at the same spot, can they begin at the same spot? No way. The fifty-day count in Leviticus 23 is very specific—the start day is the morrow after the weekly Sabbath. If the start day for the fifty-day count is Sunday, and we know that the count in Deuteronomy is one day less—it's a forty-nine-day count—but it ends on the same day, when must be the first day of the count in Deuteronomy? Monday.

What is it, then, that's being referred to here, ". . . from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn"? It's referring to the time of the general harvest—the day that follows wavesheaf Sunday—when they would begin to harvest in mass and to glean the crop from the field. It's a different start day. Now, this was something that even Mr. Armstrong did not fully understand. This is legitimately classified in the area of "new knowledge and new truth." Remember, when you're talking about divine revelation, new truth will never contradict the truth that we had before. When God reveals something, you can count on that as being forever. But this knowledge of the distinction in the two counts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and their spiritual meanings, is that which we came to understand through the ministry of Mr. Raymond Cole. Most importantly, God revealed it, and showed us the difference.

What does it mean to us? Starting the fifty-day count with wavesheaf Sunday points to Jesus Christ who was the first of the firstfruits. Remember, Pentecost represents the harvest of the firstfruits—that small number of people who are called out of the world and given that chance to become a part of the Church now—as distinguished from the great fall harvest, which represents the billions of humanity who will not receive their opportunity for salvation, saving knowledge, until later, and who will be harvested after the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. Pentecost culminates the early spring harvest season. Pentecost must fall in the spring. It's a spring Holy Day, and so it represents the harvest of the firstfruits.

Was Jesus Christ a part of that harvest of the firstfruits? Yes, He was. We won't take the time to turn to those scriptures because we've done so in the past, but Jesus Christ was the first of the firstfruits harvest. Did they plant a separate,

little crop off in its own area that they grew in order to offer as the wavesheaf? No. How did they get the wavesheaf offering that they brought to the priest on that Sunday? They went out to the field where the entire spring harvest was planted, and they cut a small sheaf out of the general harvest, and they brought it to represent Jesus Christ. What's the significance of that? Jesus Christ was part of the firstfruits. He was part of the spiritual harvest, brethren, that you and I are a part of. The only difference is, He was the first. He was the first glean from that harvest. He was the first human being who died, was resurrected to immortality, and was given that position—that office—in the God Family. He was the forerunner for that which you and I hope to achieve. We've gone through all of these things in the past when I covered the significance of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ in this Fundamentals of Belief series. I'm not going to go through all of that to repeat it, but just synoptically so you understand why this counting is important and what all of these different aspects of the two counts in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16 mean spiritually.

The fifty-day count in Leviticus, beginning with wavesheaf Sunday, pictures and points to Jesus Christ, the first of the firstfruits, who is our High Priest who came before and was the first one to receive that reward in the Family of God. Why the separate count in Deuteronomy? Why a distinct forty-nine-day count in Deuteronomy? Through God's wisdom, He gave us that count to symbolize not Jesus Christ, but all of you—all of you who are a part of that firstfruit harvest that are going to follow in His footsteps. If you hold fast to the faith once delivered and do not turn and quench that Spirit in your life—if you hold fast to the very end when Jesus Christ returns—you, too, are going to receive immortality the same way Jesus Christ received it. You are going to be resurrected. You are going to be given an office as a priest and a king in that very Family. You are going to receive the very same reward that Jesus Christ received, although He's always going to be in higher authority within that Family, under the Father. But you, too, are going to be born into that Family. You were called out of this world to become a part of that firstfruits harvest, and these two different counts emphasize the two different aspects of that early harvest.

The fifty-day count in Leviticus 23 represents Christ as the first of the firstfruits. The forty-nine-day count in Deuteronomy represents the general harvest of all of those in the Church who are going to follow in Christ's footsteps at the first resurrection when He returns. It is a beautiful and a glorious picture. That's an

aspect that the early Church didn't even really understand yet. That is an evidence, brethren, of new truth, which adds to and augments our understanding of this fabulous plan, but does not do violence at all to a single thing that we learned from the beginning. That's how growth occurs. That's adding to and augmenting, but never contradicting or violating that which we had from the beginning.

Mr. Armstrong knew that the forty-nine count and the fifty count had to be reconciled. If he understood it, he never explained it in writing, that I'm aware of—that it was a necessity to keep Pentecost after the forty-nine count. Remember, he was keeping day fifty according to his exclusive English count.

Notice Numbers 28 and verse 26: "Also in the day of the firstfruits . . ." What are we talking about? We're talking about this Feast of Pentecost—the Feast of Weeks.

Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the [Eternal], after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

Here's a command about keeping Pentecost—the Feast of Weeks. And what does it say specifically? When is the Feast? ". . . after your weeks be out . . ."—that means, once this count of weeks is fully and completely over. So Mr. Armstrong understood that all forty-nine days—these seven weeks (seven times seven is forty-nine)—had to be completely finished before the Feast started, because it says, ". . . after your weeks be out . . ." This was not a command to keep the forty-ninth day. He understood that the forty-ninth day had to be finished, and so he had confidence in saying, "Okay, that's why." Leviticus has a fifty-day count; Deuteronomy only has a forty-nine-day count. But in the case of Deuteronomy, when you're just counting weeks, you don't keep the last day—the forty-ninth day. The forty-ninth day must be completed, and then you keep it, which happens to be, according to Mr. Armstrong's reckoning, the fiftieth day. That's how he reconciled the two counts.

We've since gained greater understanding about the real significance of the forty-nine and the fifty-day count, and why God gave two different ways to count to the same Holy Day. They each have their own spiritual significance. When we keep Pentecost, we are celebrating our hope for birth into that Family—to be

harvested and to be made a part of the very Family of God—knowing that Jesus Christ, who was the first of the firstfruits on the wavesheaf day, rose and gave us that hope through His qualification.

The reality is, brethren, since we're already at an hour, I'm going to give us a break here because I don't want to get into the next section where we start putting these pieces together. I'll give you a mental break and a chance to review those things, and then we'll come back next week and begin to put all these pieces together—the start date and the number of days to count in both the fifty-day count in Leviticus and the forty-nine-day count in Deuteronomy. We will see how both of them lead to Pentecost, and how, when you use the correct counting in the Hebrew, it will absolutely substantiate that which Mr. Armstrong taught from the simple English count. More, next time.