

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #22

When Pentecost Comes

Kenny Kitzke

LawstSheep Ministries

If you want to follow Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you may be led by the Holy Spirit to worship our Father in spirit and in truth; the very WAY Jesus did! Let's be clear about this. Jesus NEVER rested from work and went to a Church building for worship on Sunday. Jesus NEVER assembled for worship on All Saints Day, what we now call Halloween, or on December 25. And, Jesus NEVER worshipped on "Pentecost Sunday."

What does scripture reveal about how and when Jesus worshipped God the Father? Scripture clearly shows that He kept the Sabbaths of the LORD God which were made for man and given in His written words and the Ten Commandments to His chosen people and nation Israel. The custom of Jesus was to go to the synagogue every Sabbath on the seventh-day of the week. He went every year to each of the three Feasts of the LORD in Jerusalem and kept holy the seven high annual Sabbath days appointed by God, our Father, for rest and worship before Him.

Before I studied the written word of God, especially the first five books of the Bible often called the Books of Moses, I worshipped God according to what you might call "Christian traditions." I went to a Church building each Sunday for a worship service called a mass conducted by a priest. I celebrated Easter Sunday. I celebrated Pentecost Sunday. I celebrated Christmas. I thought these were the days a follower of Jesus were to keep holy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, study of the scriptures plus the history of religion, I found out these are NOT commanded by God but are merely the traditions of men.

I had been deceived. I was more upset with myself for allowing myself to be so easily duped as I was with those who had deceived me. For, with my eyes opened, it was obvious that they too had been deceived by their teachers at their seminaries and by the leaders of their religious denominations. The strangest thing about being deceived is that you don't realize it. And, if someone suggests that you are deceived in your beliefs or practices, you can't help but get defensive. It is simply human, even for Christ's disciples.

And, you may hang on to and defend your beliefs and practices despite mounds of evidence that you are wrong. Think back to a time when everyone believed that the sun revolved around the earth. When a few men sat back and scientifically investigated this belief, they soon came to a new understanding. It just looked like the sun moved around the earth. The truth was the earth revolved around the sun. Our own eyes deceived us!

How much easier is it to get ideas into our head based on what religious leaders tell us which can also deceive us? Think about this. How long did it take for the new belief by a tiny remnant about the earth and sun to take hold among ALL the people living on the

earth? Was it months, years, decades or even centuries?

That is indicative of how difficult it is for a human to admit they were wrong and had been deceived and duped and had acted foolishly most of their life. It certainly was difficult for me to accept that what I had been taught since a child, and what my parents did until they died, simply did not conform to the word of God.

Once I realized all this, I had no choice but to change what I do to worship God His way. I began following Jesus and not men. I now worship the way Jesus did; and when He did. I now worship the way the Apostle Paul did. Recall that Paul was the apostle Jesus chose to teach the Gentiles the good news of how to worship the only true God in spirit and in truth.

Paul NEVER taught any Gentile to worship God each Sunday INSTEAD of on the seventh-day Saturday Sabbath. Paul NEVER taught anyone to celebrate the birth of Jesus period. Paul NEVER taught or celebrated an Easter resurrection on a Sunday morning. NEVER! So, from where did all these ideas, and long-standing traditions, for how and when Gentiles are to worship God come if not from the mouth of God?

This summer, after the Feast of Weeks and the Day of Pentecost, and before the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall, I hope to explore with you what I have found out about all this. It may shock you. It surely did me. Boy, was I naïve. How could I be fooled so easily to keep the traditions of men and not keep the written word of God? How could I continue to ignore how the living Word of God, Jesus, the Son of God, perfectly kept the written word of God as recorded in the New Testament?

But, for this Sabbath, I want to focus on just when did Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, keep the Feast of Weeks and the Day of Pentecost? I am sorry to admit that there may be over twenty different ways being practiced today to arrive at just what day it is that the Day of Pentecost completely comes? Just when is this holy day of the Lord?

Let me start with a few of the factors that can lead to proclaiming a different day on our Gregorian calendar for the commanded holy Day of Pentecost observance.

1. What month is the first month of the sacred calendar year according to God's calendar? This equates to whether the last year has twelve or thirteen months and how that decision is made. Since the Feast of Unleavened Bread (called Passover) is in the first month of God's sacred calendar, and the Feast of Weeks follows it, we can have two different days to celebrate the Day of Pentecost as the Feast of Weeks ends. This was, for example, an issue in the year 2005 when the month that the barley was abib (aviv) in Jerusalem was one month EARLIER than on the Jewish calculated solar calendar.

2. Is the first day of any month determined by observing and marking the condition of the moon or from an astronomical model? As we know from our previous calendar discussions, our modern Gregorian calendar is a solar calendar which ignores the cycles of the moon. Months have been assigned a fixed number of days (except for February).

The Christian Church method for determining Pentecost Sunday was fixed at the seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday by Emperor Constantine of Rome. However the day of Easter Sunday is on different days of two different months each year based primarily upon the vernal equinox of the sun. Therefore, the same is true for the Day of Pentecost.

3. Is the first day of a month determined by physically seeing the first crescent of a new moon appear, or is it a mathematical point of time based upon the linear conjunction of the sun, moon and earth? At that time you can't see any moon at all (a dark or molad moon condition)? This would make the Day of Pentecost a day or two earlier on the Gregorian calendar every year.

4. Another factor is on what day does the count to the fiftieth day begin? Is the event of say the wave offering of the barley, the weekly Sabbath or the high Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread included in the count? Or, does the count start the next day? This dispute is over whether or not the count is "inclusive." If it is not, we may find groups concluding that Pentecost is ALWAYS on a Monday!

But, the most controversial cause of variation in proclaiming the correct Day of Pentecost is whether the Sabbath referenced in the Law of God is meant to be the high, annual Sabbath day of Abib 15, or whether it is the regular weekly Sabbath day during the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the first month of the LORD'S sacred calendar.

This is not a new question. It is two thousand years old. It goes back to the time of Jesus. If you are hoping that Brother Kenny has finally solved this problem FOR SURE, you will be disappointed. What I have done is to try to understand why there is a disagreement. Based upon that understanding, and Scripture, along with prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I have labored to reach a wise conviction about why I believe what I now believe and why I do what I now do. I can only share that understanding with you. I can give you an answer for what I do based on the evidence available to me.

You can, and should, test my answer against Scripture. If you think your understanding is superior, I would hope you would be willing to give me an answer to the questions I will raise to you. If we are searching for the truth with love toward one another, we should be able to test our beliefs and perhaps become of like mind.

This process may feel like iron trying to sharpen iron, and produce more sparks than honed sword edges. This is a Biblical challenge to the people of God for their attitude toward one another. We see it as a proverb to the wise in Prov. 27:17:

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

If we end up agreeing to disagree, we can remain friends in Jesus and look for fellowship in other ways that are comfortable to both our minds. Our countenance in dealing with one another can improve out of respect for each others diligence in the study and meditation on the word of God in the search for Truth.

Let us first look at a key Scripture which deals with the timing of the Day of Pentecost. In Lev. 23: 15-17, we find the famous count off of fifty days:

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD.

If this was the only scripture we had, and we were convinced that it was correctly translated into English, I too would conclude the command is to count off fifty days starting from the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the day after the seventh weekly Sabbath. Then, on that same day, the people of Israel were to make an offering of new grain to the LORD in the form of two loaves of bread baked with leaven. These are the firstfruits of the wheat harvest and are to be offered to the LORD as a wave offering by the priest. And, until you made that offering, you were not to eat any bread, nor parched or fresh grain from the harvest in your dwelling.

The day after a weekly Sabbath is the first day of a week, or what we today would call Sunday. The day after the seventh Sabbath would also be the fiftieth day of the count and also be a Sunday. It is on this day that a holy convocation would be proclaimed according to Lev. 23: 21. This is the holy day of the LORD called the Day of Pentecost and it would seemingly ALWAYS be on a Sunday.

This seems to also nicely fit with a reason why no specific day of any specific Biblical month is commanded for this holy day. It is the only one of the seven annual holy days of the LORD that DOES NOT have a specific numeric appointed day and month for a holy convocation. So if day fifty of the count is ALWAYS on a Sunday, it would be on a different day of the month from year to year on God's calendar.

Interestingly, there are other scriptures that bring into question whether the Sabbath that starts the count is the weekly Sabbath day during the Feast of Unleavened Bread or whether it is referring to the high Sabbath day of that feast, namely Abib 15, the holy day called the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

If Scripture did mean to start the count on the high Sabbath day, and not the weekly Sabbath day, the first thing we need to accept is that this day would also not always fall on the same day of the month on God's calendar. So, we CANNOT draw the conclusion that the reason the Day of Pentecost was not given a specific day and month for celebration by the LORD was that He intended that day to ALWAYS be on a Sunday.

Clearly, Judaism today does not accept that idea either. They ALWAYS celebrate the holy day of the Feast of Weeks on Sivan 6, Sivan being the third month of the sacred year. This is part of the modern, worldwide calendar first developed by Rabbi Hillel II almost 300 years after Jesus kept this Feast according to a different method. I have

already covered in a previous Lord of the Sabbath program why this is neither the day commanded by the LORD, nor the day kept holy in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. I will not repeat those facts other than to reiterate that no Bible scholar I know of would dispute that fact.

If you are what we might call a Messianic Jew, who supposedly accepts not only the Torah of God, but Jesus as its promised Messiah, and you celebrate the completion of the Feast of Weeks ALWAYS on Sivan 6, will you please contact me and explain how you conclude that this is following the Messiah of Israel? You must know something that I don't know.

Now, here is something amazing. The Roman Catholic Church admits that it started its own worship holidays which ARE NOT commanded in the Bible. This includes Pentecost Sunday, All Saints Day, Easter and Christmas. However, did you know that major sects of Judaism, and other groups who claim to know the God of Abraham and His Word and Law, also believe that the Day of Pentecost, is ALWAYS on a Sunday? Let us consider a few of these religious groups.

First are the Sadducees, a small sect of Jews which existed at the time of Jesus. Who were these people? What else besides Pentecost always being on a Sunday did they believe that differed from the majority of Jews and the practices of the ruling Sanhedrin?

The Sadducees were akin to a political party of today. They were associated with the sons of Zadok, the high priest who declared himself favorable to King Solomon when Abiathar took the favor of Adonijah. They were also known as Zadokites.

The Sadducees saw themselves as a sacred, royal, family of the high priest and behaved as an aristocracy. You might say they tended to have their nose in the air compared to the lower-class, peasant-like Jews. They were closely tied in with the dynasty of King Herod, an Edomite, and getting special consideration from the king such as being given positions of authority as judges and other governmental officials. They were like a governmental approved class of priests in authority over the common Jews by affirmation of the King.

There were two main doctrinal views held by what might be called the school of the Sadducees. One was a denial of an oral law of Moses as passed down in the generations of Israel and as kept by their main political and spiritual opponents, the Pharisees. The Sadducees believed that only the written Law of Moses should have any divine authority in conducting the affairs of the nation.

According to Josephus, the Jewish historian who wrote about the times of Jesus, the Sadducees believed in the freedom of the human will, which the Pharisees denied. They pushed this belief to the extent that God would be excluded from the role of civil government in the world. If this strikes a chord regarding much of our governmental world today, of a separation of the church from the state, then you have the flavor of the ideology of the Sadducee party.

The second doctrinal split was that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels or a spiritual afterlife of punishment or reward. Again, you can sense this spirit of the Sadducees is still alive in the anti-God, atheistic or agnostic secular world of non-believers today.

Jesus warned His disciples in Mat. 16 to take heed and beware of the doctrine of the Sadducees. But, He was not specific as to which doctrine or teaching of the Sadducees He meant. It is also noteworthy that John the Baptist called them a “Brood of vipers!” when they came to watch him baptizing the multitudes into water in the Jordan river.

However, it was on this second point that Jesus pointedly took the Sadducees to task. We find in response to their taunting Jesus concerning the resurrection of the dead and if a wife had more than one husband in this life, whose wife would she be after the resurrection? Certainly in this case, we find the response of Jesus very telling about the scriptural knowledge of the Sadducees in Mat. 22: 29:

Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.”

As you may know, Jesus was not into political issues and did not resist the secular, governmental power and authority of Rome during His life or ministry. Some of the sects of Judaism at that time did. In fact, Jesus told them to render to Caesar what was his and to God what was His, a form of separation of Church and State. It might behoove Christians today to learn and follow Jesus’ teaching on this.

So, we can’t say with certainty that Jesus rejected the specific belief of the Sadducees concerning from which Sabbath to start the count to Pentecost. But, He did warn us to take heed of their doctrine and beware of it. I have done both. I have taken heed of their doctrine on Pentecost ALWAYS on Sunday. Jesus said to beware of their doctrine, and that is what I am trying to do. You may also want to consider how the high priests and their families of the Sadducees not only called for the crucifixion of Jesus, they also conspired to have Peter and John imprisoned for preaching that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead as recorded in Acts 5.

History tells us that the sect of the Sadducees and their school of doctrine disappeared in the first century, not long after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD by Roman Emperor Titus and the flight of the Jewish religious and political leaders from Jerusalem. Does this tell us anything about the true doctrine of God? Did it pass away too like the Sadducees? Of course not! Yet, many who keep the Day of Pentecost ALWAYS on a Sunday, still follow the doctrine of the Sadducees though the sect did not survive to teach it to them today.

Another sect of Judaism still keeping an ALWAYS on Sunday Pentecost are the Karaites. They, like the Sadducees, have concluded that only the written Torah is to be followed and the oral teachings of modern Rabbinic Judaism are of men and not necessarily of

God. So, like me, Karaites today do not follow the modern Jewish Calendar for the Feasts of the LORD for it is clearly of men.

The Kararite Jews have their primary origin in Egypt. They have their own synagogue distinct from the Rabbinic synagogue even one right down the street. This is sort of similar to the different Church denominations today with two or three different Church buildings on the same corner.

The Karaites correctly use a sacred calendar with months based upon the new crescent moons and years based upon the abib stage of barley. However, when it comes to the count to the Day of Pentecost, they conclude from the Torah alone that the Sabbath being referred to in starting the count is the weekly Sabbath. They also believe the Ten Commandments were given to Israel on this same 50th day.

They DO NOT accept Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. They DO NOT accept that God poured out His Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost just one week after Jesus rose to heaven. They DO NOT accept that the Holy Spirit of God was poured out on men who would repent of their sin of crucifying God's sent Savior. They WILL NOT be baptized and believe in His Son as the anointed one of God, their Savior, and the Lord of their life. They DO NOT accept Jesus nor His disciples as the head and body of the Church of God. Are these ones you would accept to teach you the proper keeping of the LORD'S Day of Pentecost, or the one that the Jesus we believe in kept and which we should follow?

The Samaritans are another small group that still keeps the Day of Pentecost ALWAYS on a Sunday. A few hundred Samaritans still survive and are settled in the town of Nablus in modern Israel.

The people known as Samaritans were well known in the time of Jesus. Originally the term referred to inhabitants of the city of Samaria which was about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. But, it became more generally applied to the people and ten tribes of Israel who lived in the Northern Kingdom (or house) of Israel. Jeroboam had made himself their first king when the Kingdom of Israel that was ruled from Jerusalem split into two kingdoms, or houses, with new capital cities.

Despite this split in the nation of Israel, all the men of Samaria would still come to the pilgrim Feasts of the LORD in Jerusalem as late as 726 BC. Of course, the whole House of Israel was taken captive about 721 BC by Assyria and removed from their land. The King of Assyria later repopulated this area of Samaria with pagan and idolatrous tribes.

After complaining to the King, he sent one of his still captive Jewish priests to show them how to fear the LORD. However, they continued to worship other divinities and their idols. Later when the House of Judah had been exiled to Babylon and then returned to Jerusalem, the Samaritan people sought to resume worship there but were refused by the Jewish leaders. This led to a fierce feud between the Samaritans and the Jews.

It is indeed a fascinating history but I do not have the time to get into it much deeper.

Suffice it to say that by about 409 BC, a man named Manasseh of the priestly line was expelled by Nehemiah from Jerusalem for an unlawful marriage. He received permission from the King of Persia to build a temple on Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans. The animosity between the Jews who worshipped at Mt. Zion in Jerusalem and the renegade Samaritans who worshipped at Mt. Gerizim and claimed to follow the Torah of God grew into intense hatred. It continued to the time of Jesus.

All the more interesting is the story Jesus told about the Good Samaritan and His encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well on His way to Jerusalem. It seems that a person without the Law, or not part of Israel genetically, but who is merciful and kind and righteous is pleasing to God. However, Jesus also comments on the type of worship (which would include the worship on Pentecost ALWAYS on a Sunday) conducted by the Samaritans in John 4: 21-22:

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

It seems pretty clear that Jesus came down on the side of the Jews and who and how they worshipped in Jerusalem. He pointed out a weakness in the worship by the Samaritans for they did not even know who they worshipped or the correct place of worship. Do you believe that the Samaritans had the appointed times for the Feasts of the LORD right, but did not know the true God who was to be worshipped correctly in Jerusalem?

Well, I can't believe how this half hour has flown by. I have too much more to say about how to determine the appointed time for the Day of Pentecost than I can possibly finish.

I will just summarize why I am leery of keeping the Day of Pentecost ALWAYS on either Sivan 6 or ALWAYS on Sunday. Look at the groups who do celebrate these days. Sure, hear and study and heed what they teach and do as doctrine, but beware of that says Jesus! Some of these Sunday Pentecost teachers do not even accept Jesus as the Messiah! Some accept Him but have changed the appointed times of worship given by God Himself. Beware, brethren.

Well, if the Day of Pentecost isn't ALWAYS on the seventh Sunday AFTER Easter like the Church claims, or ALWAYS on Sivan 6 like modern Judaism claims or ALWAYS on the seventh Sunday after the weekly Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as the Sadducees, Karaites or Samaritans claim, then when is it and why? I'll share with you my best understanding next Sabbath. This is Brother Kenny saying shalom and may God be gracious to you until His next Sabbath day.