

When Did the Apostles Receive the Holy Spirit?

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As I'm sure most of you are aware, at the end of Christ's ministry He was crucified. He was killed for the sins of mankind. To be the sacrifice to atone for all of us. As He predicted, He was then placed in a tomb. He was there for three days and three nights, exactly as He said it would be the case. And at the end of that three days and three nights, He was resurrected back to being a God being. And then, on Wave Sheaf Sunday, He ascends to the Father. He goes before the Father to fulfill the symbolism of the Wave Sheaf offering to be the atoning sacrifice for all of mankind. And then later that day, He returns back down to earth and interacts with a number of human beings. One of those interactions that He had was a meeting with the Apostles, where He made a statement to them that sometimes is the subject of a lot of debate regarding exactly how we should interpret it.

The statement I'm referring to is recorded in the book of John, and we'll look at that a little bit later today. But He makes a blowing gesture, and He says to the Apostles, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Now again, due to the way that that particular statement is worded it is sometimes debated. And the debate is, was Christ saying that the ten Apostles that were present there -- because Judas is already dead, and Thomas is not present for this particular meeting. But the ten that are there, did they receive the Holy Spirit right when Christ said that? Is that what He meant? Or was He making a statement foreshadowing what would happen 50 days later on the Feast of Pentecost in the Acts 2 story?

Now, in my history in the Church of God, this particular verse is oftentimes not debated that much within the Church of God. At least that's not been my experience throughout most of my life. It's been more often a subject of great debate within Protestant circles. However, over the last few years, I've seen this particular verse being debated within Church of God circles. And when it is, it's oftentimes not just a technical argument about one particular difficult scripture that only affects a few people and really doesn't matter in the big scheme of things. It's used as the logical basis to then alter the meaning of the spring Holy Days, and particularly the Feast of Pentecost. And because of the wide-reaching ramifications of this argument, I'd like to spend some time today in the sermon looking at this in detail to understand exactly how we should interpret this particular scripture. And again, looking at the wide-reaching ramifications that can come from whichever conclusion you draw from this scripture. So, if you'd like a title for this sermon, it's:

When Did the Apostles Receive the Holy Spirit?

As we're going to see here, this is kind of the crux of the argument on this subject. Now, to see what account I'm referring to here, turn over to John 20. We'll see here this records events that take place on Wave Sheaf Sunday, after Christ has appeared

before the Father to fulfill the symbolism of the Wave Sheaf and atone for the sins of mankind. But then later on that Sunday afternoon, He has a meeting with the Apostles. As I mentioned previously, only ten of the Apostles are actually present at this particular meeting, because Judas is already dead and hasn't been replaced yet. And Thomas is not actually present at this particular meeting. But pick up here in John 20, in verse 19.

John 20:19 *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20) When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22) And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (NKJV)*

Now, verse 22, as I mentioned, is oftentimes the subject of debate. Because again, you can see the way that this is worded here in English -- and even in the Greek -- you could argue it either way. You could argue that He was talking about something that would happen right at that moment, and those ten guys would receive the Holy Spirit right at that time. Or you could argue that He's foreshadowing what would take place 50 days later in the book of Acts, in Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost. That's what He's talking about. Now, oftentimes, when we look at a difficult scripture like this, the first avenue you go to try to clarify how to understand it is to look back at the original language. As you know, our New Testaments today are typically translated from Greek manuscripts. So, you look at the Greek to see, does that clarify the subject? Well, in this particular case, that's actually not going to help you a whole lot.

Now the reason I mention that is if you do an internet search on this subject and look into the various arguments presented around this verse and the debates that I mentioned. The two camps being those that argue He was saying that the Apostles were going to receive the Holy Spirit right then, right that day when He was saying this. And others saying, no, He's foreshadowing what happens in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. What you're going to find when you look into this from the Greek perspective is you're going to find people on both sides of the argument with credentials in the Greek language who both tell you that they're fluent in Greek. They really understand the Greek and the grammar and such, and they'll have credentials to back that up. They'll both tell you that the Greek grammar in this verse requires you to come to their conclusion on the argument. And they'll come to polar opposite conclusions. It really just becomes a game of "pick your expert," because the "experts" don't agree. So, it doesn't really help you much.

A much more effective way to look at this is from the consistency of Scripture. In other words, when you look at a subject, you never make doctrine based upon a single verse. You always want to look at what's the theme throughout the Bible. Because sometimes in a particular single verse, there might be a translation error that confused it. Or there might be a manuscript error that confused a single verse. But if you look at the

consistent trend of all the Scriptures that talk about a subject. If they're all going in one direction, and one verse seems to contradict, you know what the overall conclusion is. It's what the consistency of Scripture is saying. And maybe there's a problem with understanding one verse, but obviously, one verse can't overturn all the others.

Now, to kind of illustrate the point and learn some lessons that are going to be valuable for us today in dissecting this subject, I'd like to look at a difficult scripture that addresses a completely different subject. It's on a totally different subject, and we'll come back to this subject here to address it. But what I want you to see is some general principles that I think are going to really help us in methodology as to how we look at the subject. Now, turn over to Matthew 23. We're going to look at another verse here that's been a head-scratcher for the Church of God for most of my life. I know it was for me, for most of my life. And even up until the last few years when I finally discovered exactly what the answer was. What I'm referring to here is in Matthew 23. We'll start reading in verse 1.

Matt 23:1 *"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2) saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3) Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.'" (NKJV)*

Now, if you take this at face value, and the way it's worded here, not only in the English, but even in the Greek manuscripts, what it appears to be telling us is that Christ is commanding us to follow the doctrines of the Pharisees. In other words, follow what they teach. Just don't follow their personal example. Now, the problem with that is it contradicts everything else that Christ ever said on the subject. It contradicts everything else He says in this particular chapter. Because if you keep reading throughout this chapter, He refers to the Pharisees as fools. He calls them blind guides. They're whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones. They make their disciples that follow them worst people than they are. He says they're vipers. They're snakes. He just has a brutal critique of them. Doesn't sound like the kind of people whose teachings you'd want to follow.

Well, He also says in other parts of the Gospel accounts, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." Now, there's a couple of different definitions He gives for that. One of them is their hypocrisy, which we know. But one of the definitions also stated is their teachings, their doctrines. He said they are like leaven. They lead people into sin. He also says that they teach as doctrines the commandments of men, and they set aside the commandments of God. Does that sound like a group that Christ is saying, "You should follow their teachings, just don't follow their personal example?"

Well, now let's also take that conclusion and follow it to its logical end. Because the Bible refers to what the Pharisees called the "tradition of the elders" in the Gospel accounts. In fact, Christ criticizes them because, "You put your tradition above Scripture." Well, that oral tradition that they had, referred to in the Gospels, today that's known as the Talmud. It's been written in a book, and that's what the descendants of

the Pharisees, the Orthodox Jews today, actually follow -- the Talmud. Well, if Christ is telling us that we're supposed to follow their doctrines, that would mean New Covenant Christians today should be following the Talmud. You can see the obvious problem with that. Not only does it contradict the New Testament. It contradicts the Old Testament. Because they did exactly what Christ said. They set aside the commandments of God and taught as doctrines the commandments of men.

So the point I want you to see here is even before we had an understanding of exactly what the problem was with verse 3, there were screaming red flags all over the place. If you took the conclusion that we were supposed to follow their teachings, that just contradicts everything Christ said. And if you follow it to its logical conclusion, you wind up following the Talmud. That obviously can't be the case. So that teaches us some important lessons that we're going to utilize as we look at the scripture in John 20 that we just looked at.

Well, to make a long story short. To summarize the explanation for Matthew 23:3 -- and again, I'll just give you the short version of this. I've covered it in previous sermons and provided the documentation for it. I came across the answer several years ago of exactly what took place here. There's a Hebrew scholar named Nehemia Gordon. Now, he's a Karaite Jew. He's not from a Church of God background. But he has a lot of expertise and experience in ancient manuscripts and languages and such. A friend of his -- who does believe in the New Testament, who is more of a Messianic religious individual -- reached out to Nehemia and asked him to look into this particular verse, because he spotted the obvious red flags. What this verse seems to say in English -- and again, even in the Greek -- just contradicts everything else Christ had to say. So, there's got to be a problem.

Nehemia dug around, and what he discovered was that history has clearly recorded that the book of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew and was later translated into Greek. He then found a Hebrew manuscript of the book of Matthew and noticed there was a one-word difference in Matthew 23:3 in the Hebrew manuscript he found, versus the typical Greek manuscript that our English Bibles are translated from. And that one-word difference is that when it refers to, here in verse 3, "whatever they tell you to observe that you should do", it had the word "he" and not "they". Because he refers to -- in the previous verse, the Pharisees appeal to their authority is like the authority of Moses. They sit in "the seat of Moses". Well, "he" meant Moses. Christ was actually saying, "Whatever Moses taught that you should follow, just don't follow the Pharisees."

Well, see, that answered the question, and again, it matches everything else Christ had to say about the subject. Now, again, the point I want you to get from this is even before we knew exactly what the solution was for that particular verse, it was obvious from the consistency of Scripture, Christ couldn't be telling us that we have to follow the teachings of the Pharisees. He was too critical Himself of the teachings of the Pharisees. That couldn't be what He meant.

Well, if we utilize this same principle here, and then look at where we started here with the question of: when did the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit? Because if we look at John 20, as I mentioned, there is the statement about receiving the Holy Spirit in verse 22. As I mentioned, if you look into the Greek and look to the people that call themselves “Greek experts”, what you’re going to find is dueling “experts”. You’re going to find individuals on both sides of the argument who have credentials in Greek, who will tell you the Greek requires you to come to their conclusion. So, it’s not going to solve the issue for you, unless you just pick whichever “expert” you like. There’s no consistency with it.

But we need to look at the consistency of Scripture to see what the answer is. Because we’re going to see, if we follow that, it gives us a very clear answer as to what the obvious conclusion has to be. Again, before we delve into this, let me also remind you. As I mentioned previously, throughout my lifetime this particular debate has typically occurred more often in Protestant circles. Not really so much in Church of God circles. Since the time I was a child growing up in the Church of God, the most common conclusion that’s always been taught is that the Apostles obviously received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. And that was the fundamental meaning of the Day of Pentecost. One of its primary meanings is the giving of the Holy Spirit, the establishment of the New Covenant.

The reason I mention that is because, when I’ve seen this particular debate in Church of God circles, it’s not just a technical argument about a particular difficult Scripture that really only affects ten guys and isn’t a big deal in the overall picture of things. No, it’s actually used as the logical basis to redefine the meaning of the spring Holy Days, and particularly the Feast of Pentecost. Because it’s used as an argument to say, “Well, then Pentecost doesn’t actually picture the giving of the Holy Spirit and the establishing of the New Covenant. That’s actually Wave Sheaf Sunday.” *See, that’s why this technical argument matters for you. Because it does affect the big picture.*

Now, with that in mind, turn over to Acts 1, because we’re going to see here there are comments in Acts 1 that Christ Himself makes to the Apostles. And if we understand all the details of the statements that Christ makes here, it very clearly solves this debate for us. So, we just need to unpack this and understand exactly the terminology and thoroughly prove it from other Scriptures as to what He’s saying here. And once we do that, it becomes very clear what conclusion we have to draw about the statements in John 20:22. Now, what we’re going to read here is in Acts 1:4.

Acts 1:4 *“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5) or John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (NKJV)*

Now, to understand what’s happening here, we first of all need to understand the timing of what took place here. Because we noticed in John 20 that that was taking place on Wave Sheaf Sunday. That was right after Christ had been resurrected. He’s appeared

before the Father, and He's back down on earth. Well, now Christ spends about 40 days with the Apostles and other disciples on earth after He has fulfilled the Wave Sheaf. And prior to when He goes back up into heaven and stays with the Father. That occurs about 10 days prior to the Feast of Pentecost. If you read through the rest of Acts 1 here, you'll see the events that are described here are kind of at the end of that 40 day period. So here we are, approximately 40 days after Wave Sheaf Sunday. About 10 days prior to Pentecost. And Christ is clearly saying to the Apostles that they need to stay in Jerusalem, because they're going to receive the "Promise of the Father" and be "baptized with the Holy Spirit".

Now, if you notice how verses 4 and 5 are worded, obviously, these two concepts, whatever He's referring to, are related by the way that they're worded here. And whatever they're referring to, the Apostles have not received them yet. So now let's just continue down from verse 6 through 8 to get the full context here. In verse 6.

"6) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' 7) And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'" (NKJV)

So, as I mentioned, what we need to do here is unpack what is the "Promise of the Father" and what does "baptism of the Holy Spirit" mean? Now, let me also just explain this from the point of view of those who argue that the Apostles received the Holy Spirit on Wave Sheaf Sunday. What they would argue is that "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is not referring to conversion. They would say, "Well, the Apostles actually got converted on Wave Sheaf Sunday, and Wave Sheaf Sunday really pictures when conversion takes place. And what happened in Acts 2 with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, this is just the Apostles being immersed in the Holy Spirit to receive the extra power to do the job that Christ has for them."

Because we know the Apostles had a unique job that not every average Church member was ever called to do. These guys had to preach the gospel. They performed miracles. They did dramatic healings. They sometimes raised people back from the dead. They really got people's attention with the dramatic miracles they performed. Some of them wrote the New Testament. They had very unique jobs to do. And, obviously, God had to empower them through the Holy Spirit to do that. But the argument that they make is that that's what "baptism of the Holy Spirit" means.

Now we're going to look at that a little bit later in the sermon, exactly what that means in Scripture. But I want you to understand the bigger picture of what we're unraveling here. The first thing we need to look at is: What does the Bible say is the "Promise of the Father"? Because, as we're going to see today, this is a theme that runs all throughout the Bible. It's very consistent. Now, what is the Promise of the Father? It's a promise that's made in Genesis 22, and we'll look at that here in a minute. It's made to Abraham.

It's a promise made to Abraham by God the Father that Christ would eventually descend from him and that salvation would be offered to all of mankind through Christ being "the Seed", as we're going to see it's referred to there. But that's how all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And we're going to see that this is referred to as "the promise" throughout the Bible. It's a very consistent theme.

But before we go to Genesis 22, just turn over to Acts 2. We'll notice this being referred to at the end of the Acts 2 account here on the Feast of Pentecost. Because Peter gives a sermon that day and is preaching to the people, explaining what's taking place. We're just going to jump down to verse 37 here to pick up at the latter part of Peter's sermon.

Acts 2:37 *"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'"*
38) *Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'* (NKJV)

Now notice what Peter has just described. It's the basic process that everyone goes through. Every person called to salvation goes through the same basic process. You have to repent, be baptized, have laying on of hands, and you receive the Holy Spirit. That's what officially starts you into the New Covenant and starts your journey as a Christian. That's what he's just described. Notice what verse 39 says.

"39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (NKJV)

Now obviously, he's referring to all of those that God calls as Firstfruits. Those who will be given their chance at salvation prior to the return of Christ. That's what he's referring to. But he says this is "the promise". This is the "Promise of the Father" is what it is. As I mentioned before, Genesis 22 is where this promise was originally made. So, let's turn over to Genesis 22. We're going to see this and then follow this theme through the Bible here. We're going to see that we can prove conclusively exactly what this is. Now this is Genesis 22. We're going to pick up in verse 15, but we're jumping in the middle of the context of a very famous story that you've probably read many times before. This is the account where Abraham is told he needs to take Isaac to the mountain and sacrifice him to God. And of course, Abraham goes right up to the point of about to plunge the knife into Isaac. And then God tells him to stop, because He just wanted to see that Abraham had the willingness to do this. But what we're going to pick up here is the point right after he stopped and the promises that are made to him as a result of this. This is in verse 15.

Gen 22:15 *"Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16) and said: 'By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son — 17) blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as*

the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.” (NKJV)

Now, verse 17 is very obviously referring to the physical blessings that the actual DNA descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob would receive, and the national, global prominence that these nations would eventually enjoy. But now let's read verse 18, because this is referring to a spiritual issue. To the spiritual blessing that was going to be for all mankind.

“18) In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (NKJV)

Now we're going to see in the book of Galatians, Paul is going to explain to us exactly what this is referring to. Because we don't have to speculate at all. He's going to quote this directly and tell us exactly what it means. He's going to tell us that “the seed” being referred to here is Christ. So, what's being promised here to Abraham is Christ is going to descend from him, and then salvation is going to be offered to all of mankind because of Christ's sacrifice. Now, to see that, turn over to Galatians 3, and we'll start reading in verse 7.

Gal 3:7 *“Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” (NKJV)*

Notice that's directly quoting what we just read in Genesis 22. And verse 9.

“9) So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” (NKJV)

Now jump over to verse 16 of Galatians 3.

Gal 3:16 *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.” (NKJV)*

As I mentioned, when we referred to “the seed” in Genesis 22, it's specifically talking about Christ descending from Abraham. And verse 17.

“17) And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. 18) For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” (NKJV)

As he keeps referring to “the promise”, and again, it's the promise that Christ would descend from Abraham and that ultimately salvation is going to be offered to all of mankind through Christ and through His sacrifice and what He accomplished. Now

we're going to notice, and we're only going to scratch the surface on the scriptures that address this. We're going to see that there's a theme throughout the Bible that refers to Christians who've been converted and received the Holy Spirit. Who are part of the New Covenant, following God. They're referred to as "children of the promise" and "heirs according to the promise". Again, this is directly referring to the "Promise of the Father". That's why this is tied to receiving the Holy Spirit because it's the promise of salvation being offered.

Again, I'm only going to scratch the surface today on a number of scriptures that address this. If you want to look at the Promise of the Father in more detail, on my website and my YouTube channel, I did a sermon a few years ago. I forget exactly how long it's been, but the title of the sermon is "The Promise of the Father". You can find that both on my YouTube channel and on my website if you just search that particular title. It'll go into a lot more detail and show you a lot more scriptures on this particular subject than I'm going to have time to address today. But just to see again that converted Christians are referred to as "children of the promise" -- because we're talking about the "Promise of the Father". Turn over to Romans 9 and we're going to start reading in verse 6.

Rom 9:6 *"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7) nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8) That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed."* (NKJV)

Notice, we're referred to as the "children of the promise". This is obviously New Covenant Christians who've been called to salvation and responded to that calling and have been converted. But now, turn back over to Galatians. This time, we'll go to chapter 4. We'll see this again. The "children of the promise". This is Galatians 4:28.

Gal 4:28 *"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise."* (NKJV)

It's referring to the New Covenant Church. I won't take the time to read through all of chapter 4 here, but if you do, you'll see that the verses that lead up to this particular verse are contrasting the Mount Sinai Covenant with the New Covenant -- referring to the differences between them. And it refers here to the "children of the promise". It's referring to converted Christians. Those who've been called to salvation and who've responded to that call. We're "children of the promise" because it's the "Promise of the Father".

Now, just turn the page over here to Galatians 3. We're going to see here another phrase that's used to describe New Covenant Christians. It's "heirs according to the promise". This is, as I mentioned, a theme all throughout the Bible, based upon that promise to Abraham. It's the Promise of the Father because the Father made this promise to Abraham. That's what was stated in Genesis 22. Now, pick up in verse 26 of Galatians 3.

Gal 3:26 *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29) And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (NKJV)*

Again, the Promise of the Father is what we're referring to here. So, you can see from this alone, the Promise of the Father refers to the offering of salvation. The promise that Christ would descend from Abraham, and that through Christ's sacrifice that would offer salvation. All the nations of the world would be blessed. That's what the Promise of the Father refers to. Well, if the Apostles, 40 days after Wave Sheaf Sunday, had still not received the Promise of the Father, it's pretty good evidence they didn't receive the Holy Spirit 40 days earlier. If they had, they would have already received the Promise of the Father.

But, as I mentioned before, you not only have the Promise of the Father mentioned there in Acts 1. You also have the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. So, let's just turn back over to Acts 1. Let's take a look at that. Because, as I mentioned, those that argue that, "No, the Apostles actually received the Holy Spirit -- they were converted on Wave Sheaf Sunday,". And then you ask, "Okay, so what's the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was supposed to take place on Pentecost? What does that mean?"

Because if they were already converted, why is this being referred to as happening on Pentecost? Well, the argument that will typically be presented is, "Well, baptism of the Holy Spirit doesn't really refer to conversion." As the Church of God has taught my entire life, baptism of the Holy Spirit means receiving the Holy Spirit when you're called into the Church and when you're initially baptized. Baptism of the Holy Spirit is when you receive the Holy Spirit.

They'll say, "No, this is more of a special situation. It was for people like the Apostles, who were called to do a special job, who needed special power to do all the things that they did, because they had a unique role." Which obviously they did have a special and unique role. But their argument is, "This is being immersed in the Spirit so that they can perform this role." Well, let's read through Acts 1:4 here again. We'll read through the same verses we did before. Because I want you to see again, Christ is clearly saying that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles haven't received this yet. And then we're going to follow this through the Bible to see how does the Bible consistently use the phrase “baptism of the Holy Spirit”? But to start again in verse 4.

Acts 1:4 *“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5) for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (NKJV)*

Notice again, the way the “Promise of the Father” is mentioned and the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. They’re obviously very related concepts by the way that these two verses are stated. But just to finish the context here, pick up in verse 6.

“6) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7) And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;...”
(NKJV)

In other words, *it hasn't come upon them yet.*

“...and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (NKJV)

Now, as I mentioned, the argument that’s oftentimes presented by those who would argue that the Apostles actually received the Holy Spirit on Wave Sheaf Sunday, they would argue that “baptism of the Holy Spirit”, that’s not just general conversion that everybody receives. That’s being immersed in the Holy Spirit just to have the power to do a special job. Something like the Apostles. Guys who were called for a very unique purpose and did very unique things that your average Church member was not called to do. Obviously, the Apostles did have a special job. But the question we have to answer is: what does “baptism of the Holy Spirit” refer to?

Well, to help clarify this, turn over to Acts 11. Because what we’re going to see here in Acts 11 is the point where Gentiles begin being called to salvation. Because, you see, for us today in the Church of God, the idea that God would call people to salvation from all walks of life and all races and all nationalities, that’s not a strange concept for us. We think that’s just how it works. Well, at the time the book of Acts was being written, that wasn’t exactly the perspective that the people were coming from. Because, you see, God had been exclusively dealing with Israel as His model nation. And the Israelites, the Jews of that time, tended to look at it like, “Well, Israelites, we’re God’s people. Everybody else, they’re unclean. They’re heathens. All the other nations, God wouldn’t work with those heathen Gentiles. He’d only work with us Israelites.” That was their point of view.

Even if you read through the Acts 2 account of Pentecost, it mentions people speaking different languages and from all different nations, and such. But that was because of the diaspora. That was from the scattering of the Israelites to all the different nations. These people were from all over the place, but they were all from an Israelite background. So, the idea that God could call Gentiles to conversion was a ground-shaking idea for them. That was something outside the box. So, God had to dramatically illustrate that for them.

But what we need to see here is the account in Acts 11, where this is made very clear to Peter that God is now calling Gentiles to conversion. He refers to “baptism of the Holy

Spirit". That's what they're receiving. And these are not individuals called to be Apostles, to do something unique like the twelve Apostles did. This was just people being called to be converted. Now, to get the full context here, let's start in Acts 11, in verse 1.

Acts 11:1 *"Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2) And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3) saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" (NKJV)*

Notice the fact that Peter would be meeting with Gentiles was a controversial thing in their eyes. In verse 4.

Acts 11:4 *"But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5) "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6) When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7) And I heard a voice saying to me, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' 8) But I said, "Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' 9) But the voice answered me again from heaven, "What God has cleansed you must not call common.' 10) Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11) At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12) Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13) And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14) who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' 15) And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16) Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, "John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (NKJV)*

He's quoting Christ. The same words that Christ stated in Acts 1, that we read, that they had to wait until Pentecost to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. And you're going to see here, he is attributing this to these Gentiles. That the same thing is happening to them. Well, these guys weren't called to be Apostles or do some unique special job. They're just being called to repentance, as we're about to directly read. They're just being converted as New Covenant Christians. In verse 17.

"17) If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" 18) When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." (NKJV)

Notice he's not calling these Gentiles to do some unique job like being an Apostle or a Prophet or something that requires special amounts of the Holy Spirit or special power to do. No, these are just guys being called to be converted and given the chance to be New Covenant Christians. That's all that's happening here. He's referring to this as "baptism of the Holy Spirit". So, this clarifies for us what this means. It means what the Church of God has always taught my entire life.

But just to further support this, turn over to Mark 1. We'll see here in the ministry of John the Baptist he makes very similar comments. Let's pay attention to the audience he's addressing, because he addresses this to the masses. The common everyday people that were coming to him and responding to his preaching and were being baptized. He's telling them, "I'm going to baptize you with water, but Christ is going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit." This isn't some unique, special group who needs a special amount of the Holy Spirit to do some unique job. These are just people being called to be New Covenant Christians. This is Mark 1:4.

Mark 1:4 *"John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5) Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. 6) Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7) And he preached, saying, 'There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8) I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'" (NKJV)*

Notice, he's not saying that He's going to give you a special amount of the Holy Spirit to do a special, unique job for just a one-time thing -- for a unique purpose. No, he's just saying that you're going to be converted. You're going to receive the Holy Spirit and become New Covenant Christians. That's all he's saying.

And if we turn over to 1 Corinthians 12, we'll see Paul makes this very clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit applies to everybody in the body of Christ, regardless of what role you play. The whole focus of 1 Corinthians 12 is talking about the point that God calls a variety of people. And how He utilizes them can be different. He can place us in different roles. He can give different gifts to different people. He calls a few select people to be the Apostles that wrote the New Testament. He can put people in a wide variety of roles and give them a wide variety of different gifts, depending upon His purpose for them. But all of these people are called into one body, and that's the body of Christ, the Church of God. They're all placed into this regardless of what role God has for them.

The point he's making is everybody's important. God loves and cares for everyone. He's offering salvation to everyone, and everyone should just play the role that God has given them and not be envious of somebody else's role. Because God put us all exactly where He wants us. But let's notice, when he talks about this, he specifically says that

“baptism of the Holy Spirit” places us all into that one body, and it applies to all of this group regardless of what role they're going to play. Let's pick up in 1 Corinthians 12:12.

1 Cor 12:12 *“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13) For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—...”* (NKJV)

We're all “baptized by the Spirit”. And what does baptism of the Spirit do? It places us all into the “one body”. In other words, it's a concept that applies to everyone who repents and is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit. It means exactly what the Church of God has always taught it to mean. But just continuing on in verse 13.

“...whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14) For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15) If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16) And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17) If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18) But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19) And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20) But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.” (NKJV)

So, he's saying everyone plays an important role, and God has placed everyone exactly where He wants them to be. We should all just play whatever role we've been given to the best of our ability. In verse 21.

“21) And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22) No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23) And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24) but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25) that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26) And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27) Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28) And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29) Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30) Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31) But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.” (NKJV)

As you can see here, Paul is making the point that God calls everybody. Everyone is important to Him. He places us all in different roles. Not everybody is in the same role.

But the concept of being “baptized by the Holy Spirit” into the one body, that's a concept that applies to everybody across the board. Because it just refers to being converted and receiving the Holy Spirit. That's why the concept of being baptized with the Holy Spirit is directly connected with the Promise of the Father. What's the Promise of the Father? The promise that Christ would descend from Abraham, and salvation would be offered to everyone. That's why when you're converted to be a Christian, you're “children of the promise” and “heirs according to the promise”. Because again, these all just refer to being converted and receiving the opportunity for salvation.

Just to further back this up, if we turn over to John 7, we'll see a comment here that Christ made, and then the explanation that the Apostle John records telling us exactly what Christ was referring to here. Now, what Christ is actually addressing in these verses -- this is John 7. We'll actually start reading in verse 37. He's referring to the meaning of the Eighth Day. The Last Great Day, as we often refer to it. In fact, we get the term “Last Great Day” from this particular verse. But the clarification that John gives us here provides further evidence that supports the same conclusion we've already seen here. Start reading in verse 37 of John 7.

John 7:37 *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (NKJV)*

Again, we don't need to guess or speculate in any way whatsoever what Christ is talking about, because verse 39 directly tells us. But we're also going to dig into the details of verse 39, because they're going to tell us something even more interesting. But notice in verse 39:

“39) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (NKJV)

Now notice, the announcement that Christ is making. He is saying, “Well, now everyone can receive the Holy Spirit, not just the Firstfruits, but the rest of mankind is going to be offered that as well.” It also shows us the parallels of the spring and the fall Holy Days. Now, I'm only going to briefly mention that here in this sermon. On my website, I've got a number of sermons and even study papers that go into this subject in a lot more detail. The general point I want you to see here is the spring Holy Days and the fall Holy Days are direct mirrors of each other. And what I mean by that is that Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost refer to the salvational process for the Firstfruits. But if you look at the meanings of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Eighth Day, they directly mirror the meanings of the spring Holy Days. They just apply to a different group.

As you can see here, Pentecost pictures the New Covenant for the Firstfruits. The Eighth Day is the direct equivalent, and it applies to the rest of mankind. Again, if you

want to delve into that in a lot more detail, I have a lot more information on my website that covers that. But I'm just giving you that brief overview today. Now let's look at verse 39, because it gives us some evidence, if we dig into the details, that really backs up the conclusion we've obviously come to here from Acts 1. That the Apostles didn't actually receive the Holy Spirit and become converted until Acts 2, on the Feast of Pentecost. What I want you to notice here is what it says in verse 39. I'll just read this again.

"39) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given,..." (NKJV)

And why was it not yet given?

"...because Jesus was not yet glorified." (NKJV)

Now, we need to understand what "glorified" means there. Sometimes, I know I was guilty of this for much of my life, you just assume, "Well, that just means because Christ hasn't died yet as the sacrifice for mankind, and He hasn't gone and fulfilled the Wave Sheaf before the Father atoning for our sins." Well, obviously, those were steps required for this. But there's a different significance that this is referring to here. To give you the meaning of the Greek word there that's translated as "glorified" in this verse. It's transliterated into English as "doxazo". It's Strong's # 1392. The definition I'm going to give you comes from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates. He defines this as:

"To glorify. The consequential meaning from the opinion which one forms is to recognize, honor, praise, invest with dignity, give anyone esteem or honor by putting him into an honorable position."

Now, none of this particularly talks about being put in an "honorable position". Because what we're going to see is if we look at Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, he talks about an "honorable position" that Christ is put into prior to when He receives the gift of the Holy Spirit from the Father. In other words, the authority to pour out the Holy Spirit, to give it to the rest of mankind. The Father delegates that authority to Him. But first, He's put into an "honorable position". Now, let's notice what that is. It's Acts 2 and we'll start reading in verse 32.

Acts 2:32 *"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33) Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear." (NKJV)*

See, dramatic miracles were happening that day as evidence to the people that something was happening. Because otherwise, if they just claimed the Holy Spirit was being given to people with no empirical evidence, why would the people believe it? That's why the miracles were happening. But Peter had already explained to them, "What's taking place here is God's now giving you the Holy Spirit. You're now actually

receiving conversion, is what's taking place here." But notice what he explained here. It was a three-step process. He said, "First, Christ is exalted to the right hand of the Father; then He receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, with the authority from the Father to now be able to pour out the Holy Spirit; and now, on Pentecost, He's following through and giving the Holy Spirit to everyone." What he's referring to as being "glorified" that we read there in John 7. This is being seated at the Father's right hand. That's what had to happen before He received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now we need to ask: when does the Bible say that He sat down at the right hand of the Father? Because we can answer that by turning over to Mark 16. We're going to pick up here in verse 19, and what we're going to see as we read this is this is at the end of the 40 days. Because after Christ fulfills the Wave Sheaf on Wave Sheaf Sunday, He comes back down to earth and spends 40 days with His disciples. He meets with the Apostles and even other people who are His followers. And at the end of that, He then ascends back up to heaven and stays there. Well, this is the point where it describes Him sitting down at the Father's right hand. There's no mention of this prior to that. This is in verse 19.

Mark 16:19 *"So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20) And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."* (NKJV)

So, notice, He doesn't sit down at the Father's right hand -- that's not something that takes place when He ascends to heaven and fulfills the Wave Sheaf. Obviously, He goes before the Father's throne, just like in the Hebrews 9 description of the Atonement ceremony. He goes in there with His own blood, atoning for us. It doesn't say anything about Him sitting down at the Father's right hand. That takes place here, after the 40 days. See, that's when He receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. He then pours it out to the Church on Pentecost. He couldn't possibly have given them the Holy Spirit on Wave Sheaf Sunday. He hadn't sat down at the Father's right hand yet. See, what we're saying is, the preponderance of evidence of Scripture all points in one direction. So, you obviously then know how to interpret John 20. Because, again, you don't make doctrine from one scripture and then ignore everything else in the Bible when it all points in another direction.

Another important concept to consider is our understanding of the spring Holy Days and the parallelism between the story of the Exodus and the establishment of the Mount Sinai Covenant, as it directly connects with the spiritual meaning of the spring Holy Days for the New Covenant Church. Just think about how the New Testament teaches the meaning of the spring Holy Days. It's all based on spiritual analogies that connect with the story of the Exodus. We abstain from leaven. Why? It's a picture of sin. And coming out of Egypt was like coming out of sin, coming out of slavery. So, we connect all that together. We connect the New Covenant Passover. It has different symbolism and meanings, and it's referring to Christ. But again, we parallel that, connected with Israel being delivered from slavery and the death of the firstborn. We

also connect the establishment of the New Covenant with the establishment of the Mount Sinai Covenant because there's direct parallels here.

The point I want you to see is, if you're going to take those analogies and then have a spiritual explanation, it has to follow the layout of the original story that you're making parallels to. Because if you're going to turn around and say, "No, establishing the New Covenant, that's actually pictured by Wave Sheaf Sunday," you cannot parallel that with the Exodus story. To come up with that interpretation, you literally just have to ignore the book of Exodus and the whole account, because you can't get that to match up. Now, just to build a foundation for this, let's first notice how the Bible always parallels the Mount Sinai Covenant with the New Covenant. This is stated several times in the Bible. Turn over to Jeremiah 31, and we'll see here not only the parallels, but the fact that receiving the Holy Spirit is one of the fundamental aspects that defines the New Covenant and differentiates it from the Mount Sinai Covenant.

Jer 31:31 *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32) not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33) But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;..." (NKJV)*

Now, as you know, that is basically language referring to the giving of the Holy Spirit. Because that's what writes God's law on our hearts. Then continue on in verse 33.

"...and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34) No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (NKJV)

Now, as I like to put it, there's basically three major aspects that distinguish and define the New Covenant and separate it from the Mount Sinai Covenant. One is the forgiveness of sins. The other is the offering of the Holy Spirit. And the other is the offering of salvation. It's not just receiving the Holy Spirit to have a spiritual understanding and to build God's character. It's again the offering of eternal life. That's fundamentally part of the New Covenant. Those distinguish it. But this also tells us again, once you've received the Holy Spirit, that by definition is entering into the New Covenant. And just to notice another verse on this, turn over to Hebrews 8. We'll see this is going to directly quote what we just read there in Jeremiah. This is Hebrews 8. We'll start reading in verse 7.

Heb 8:7 *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8) Because finding fault with them, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the*

house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 9) not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (NKJV)

Again, receiving the Holy Spirit is a defining aspect of the New Covenant. In verse 11.

“11) None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 13) In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” (NKJV)

Now, as I mentioned, you can see here in both of the verses we just read, the Bible repeatedly makes a direct comparison between the Mount Sinai Covenant and the New Covenant and compares and contrasts them. Again, when we look at the meaning of the spring Holy Days, what do we do? We pull the spiritual meaning for the Church, the New Covenant Church today, from spiritual analogies directly connected to the story of the Exodus. We pull directly off of that. Well, that means our explanation, our interpretation of that from a spiritual perspective, has got to match the original story and the basic layout of events. If we create an interpretation for the Church that completely contradicts the Exodus story, and we just have to basically ignore the book of Exodus to get it to work, that's a screaming red flag that you've royally messed up somewhere. Because these have to match each other.

The reason I'm pointing this out is with the Exodus story, it is very clear that the only Holy Day that you can match up the Mount Sinai Covenant with is Pentecost. Because it takes place at Mount Sinai, and that's in the third month of the year. There's only one Holy Day that ever falls in the third month of the year. There's absolutely no way to even make an argument to try to get the Mount Sinai Covenant to take place and be ratified during the Days of Unleavened Bread. You just have to ignore the book of Exodus and make up your own story to try to get that to work.

So, see, we would expect these to parallel, which is, again, another major piece of evidence that tells us the giving of the Holy Spirit and the establishing of the New Covenant has to be connected with Pentecost. Because again, if we break the symmetry here and try to make it match with Wave Sheaf Sunday, you just have to ignore the book of Exodus. And to illustrate that, just turn over to Exodus 19. This is the account when they first arrive at Mount Sinai. And again, if you read through the book of Exodus, this is the first time they start making any significant mentions of making a covenant, and this is introduced here in chapter 19.

Ex 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)

Notice, they're now in the third month. The only Holy Day that ever falls in the third month is Pentecost. There's no other option.

"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." 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." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD." (NKJV)

Now again, this is when He introduces the concept of a covenant. As you know, a few days play out here, and then in Exodus 20, that's when God thunders from the mountain the Ten Commandments and gives them the terms of what they're going to have to agree to, to make this covenant. But the covenant is actually ratified in Exodus 24.

So, let's just turn over to Exodus 24. What I want you to notice here as we read through this is there are actually two different days that are discussed here. There's the conclusion of the day when they receive the Ten Commandments, and Moses goes up and gets all the extra details that God is including in this, and Moses writes it all down. It's the following day that they actually make the covenant. Now, I won't take the time today to try to show you how this lays out to be the Sabbath prior to Pentecost, and that they actually make the covenant on Pentecost. I've covered that in previous sermons. In fact, there's a study paper on my website. It's called "The Spiritual Meaning of Pentecost", and it'll cover these details for you if you want to study that. But let's just start reading here in verse 1 of chapter 24.

Ex 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." 4) And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 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)

Notice this is the point where they're formally ratifying the covenant and agreeing to it. This is the Mount Sinai Covenant. Now, if you paid attention as we read through that, there was a point where it says Moses got up early the next morning. And that next morning, that's when they made the covenant. That's because the events of God speaking the Ten Commandments was the Saturday prior to Pentecost. And then on Pentecost, they make the covenant. My point being, the Mount Sinai Covenant is made on Pentecost. Then, obviously, the New Covenant is made on Pentecost as well, the giving of the Holy Spirit.

So, as you can see here, when you put all this evidence together, it's very obvious how we have to interpret John 20. Because you don't overturn the entire Bible off of a technical argument of Greek for one difficult scripture. You look at this and go, "Okay, the consistency of Scripture tells us a very clear story that Pentecost is the day that pictures everyone receiving the Holy Spirit." That's what pictures it. And it starts the New Covenant Church. And, obviously, when Christ told the Apostles in Acts 1, you're going to have to wait till Pentecost to receive the Promise of the Father and be baptized with the Holy Spirit, He's very clearly saying they haven't received the Holy Spirit yet.

As I mentioned previously in the sermon, again, the reason why all of this matters, it's not just a technical argument that maybe affects ten guys and doesn't really affect the big picture. The way I've seen this argument typically made in the Church of God is it's a logical basis for redefining the spring Holy Days. That's why I made a point of going into this in such great detail. So, when you see all that together, realize that that verse in John 20:22 cannot be used as a logical argument to totally change the meaning of the spring Holy Days. One of the fundamental meanings of Pentecost is the establishment of the New Covenant and the giving of the Holy Spirit. It also pictures the resurrection, as Leviticus 23 tells us. As I like to put it, it pictures the day of salvation for the Firstfruits.

So, brethren, if you look at this subject, now we can understand, obviously, what John 20:22 has to be telling us. Obviously, Christ was basically foretelling what was going to happen, foreshadowing what was going to happen in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. So, now we can understand this clearly and realize that Pentecost is the Holy Day that pictures the giving of the Holy Spirit.