

Sanctification And Holiness (Part 5)

Clean, Unclean, and the Wavesheaf Offering

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This is the fifth sermon in this series on sanctification, the sacrifices, and Pentecost. Before we get into today's message I want to remind us briefly of what we covered in my last message.

The core of that message concerned the words *strange*, *stranger*, *profane*, and *alien* (or *foreigner*). They all indicate basically the same thing: a person or a thing not known or recognized by God. It is something or someone that is not authentic, is not acceptable, or does not meet the standards; thus the terms can indicate an adulterous person. Remember I read that scripture in Proverbs about the "strange" woman, and thus that same Hebrew word will be translated from time to time as *adulteress*, *adultery*, or *immoral*. Certainly that adulteress does not measure up to the standard of what a wife should be.

It can mean even someone who is a non-Israelite, and therefore a Gentile is a stranger. He is an alien. It can mean any person—Israelite or Gentile—who has not made the Old Covenant with God, and of course by extension the New Covenant as well. Therefore it indicates an unconverted person.

It can mean an Israelite or a Gentile who has *made* the covenant with God, but is not qualified or recognized by God to perform a certain job. For example, an ordinary Levite, who certainly has made the covenant with God, was considered a *stranger* by God when attempting to perform the function of a priest. Unless he was a Levite *and* a priest—someone who had descended from Aaron—if he tried to make a sacrifice on the altar, he was considered by God as being a stranger. He was not recognized. He was not authentic for doing that responsibility.

You might recall that neither *strange* incense nor *strange* fire was acceptable for use in the incense offering. They were not recognized by God as authentic; that is, something that He had stipulated to use.

God has His reasons for why He is so specific. I have to tell you that I do not always know why. I do not know the specific reason, but because I know His character, I trust that there is some benefit for us in following His commands.

We closed that sermon with the thought that the sum of these very specific stipulations is that **only** the offerings to Him that are acceptable are those things which He has given us in the first place. He is therefore, in such a case, when we obey Him, receiving back what He has given. These things indeed are truly holy. We—meaning mankind—cannot make offerings holy simply by declaring them holy.

There is one final area that I want to go into that I think is a vital aspect of this very important matter of holiness in a situation that is common to all of us. I think that we will be able to recognize this as I begin to go through it.

We are not going to begin in either Leviticus 11 or Deuteronomy 14, even though they address the subject of the eating of flesh, but rather we are going to begin in I Corinthians 10, and then go back to Deuteronomy 14.

I Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.

While the subject in this context does not directly touch on "clean" and "unclean," it does, when seen within the broad context of the principle of doing all things to the glory of God. Everything that we do must be done with the glory of God in mind, because of who we are as a result of His calling. Nothing in our conduct should obstruct the glory of God from being reflected in our lives.

Now food taken within us to maintain and build good health is not something that we should be careless about. I mean *willfully* careless about.

Deuteronomy 14:1-2 You are the children of the LORD your God: you shall not cut yourselves nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. For you are a holy people unto the LORD your God.

Let us stop and ask a question. What ***makes*** us holy? It is not what *we* did. It was what *God* did. He was the One who made us holy.

Deuteronomy 14:2-3 For you are a holy people unto the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you [We became holy through His choice] to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. You shall not eat any abominable thing.

This is right in the context of being holy. "You shall not eat any abominable thing."

The word "abominable" denotes anything that is impure, unclean, and totally devoid of holiness. That is not my definition. Believe it or not, that came from the Protestant notes given in the margin of my Bible. So they recognize that truth. Abominable is being used here in the same sense as the word *stranger*. Anything that is abominable is not acceptable. It is not authentic. It is not recognized by God as being food fit for His children.

Leviticus 11:43 You shall not make yourselves abominable [This is exactly the same word that appeared in Deuteronomy 14:3.] with any creeping thing that creeps, neither shall you make yourselves unclean with them, that you should be defiled thereby.

To eat something "abominable" makes one unclean. Notice the strength of these words: abominable; unclean; defiled thereby. These are all connected with the eating of certain things. Why?

Leviticus 11:44 For I am the LORD your God: you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy.

The subject here is maintaining the holiness that God gave us as a result of His calling.

Leviticus 11:44-45 You shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall you defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. For I am the LORD that brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

What we eat has very much to do with holiness.

Leviticus 11:46-47 This is the law [Is it just of the creeping things? No. It is the law] of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps upon the earth: To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.

What is the danger here? It is *lest we become unholy* —that we make ourselves, render ourselves defiled, abominable, by what we eat.

Is the impurity merely physical, or something of lesser importance? Well, let us think about this. Turn to the book of Malachi and look at this from a different angle. God complains.

Malachi 1:7 You offer polluted [defiled] bread [food] upon my altar; and you say, Wherein have we polluted you? [God replies] In that you say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.

Do you understand it does not matter that they said those words. What matters is their conduct, and their conduct is showing what they think about God by what they offer on the altar.

Malachi 1:8 And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto your governor; will he be pleased with you, or accept your person? Says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun [in the east] even unto the going down of the same [in the west] my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, says the LORD of hosts.

God is re-establishing the standard that He expects from the priests that are serving at His altar.

Malachi 1:12 But you have profaned it, in that you say, The table of the LORD is polluted [defiled]; and the fruit thereof, even his meat [His food] is contemptible.

The altar symbolically represents God's table, and the sacrifice that is placed upon it represents His food. As the sacrifice burns on the altar it is understood, symbolically as God eating it. So what burns on the altar is *God's* food. That is very clear. God was upset, to say the least, that they were putting food on His table that was not acceptable. It was not up to standard. It was not authentic. It was not recognized by Him as being acceptable so that He would accept their offering. And so God, in verses 11 and 12, uses the word "pure" in reference to His desire as what *should* be on that altar in contrast to what was being offered by the priests.

Let us go back to Leviticus 11:44. We are going to look at this again because of the use of the word "defiled."

Leviticus 11:44 For I am the LORD your God: you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall you defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

That word "defile" appears in other places in other context than the sacrifices. Believe it or not, there are people out there with church of God qualifications on them, who will tell you that this word "defile" only means *ceremonial* defilement, thus making the food *common*. But what we are

going to see in just a couple of scriptures I think will be enough to show you that the word "defile" is not only used for ceremonial defilement, but it is used for *spiritual* defilement as well.

Turn now to Leviticus 18:23 and look at this context.

Leviticus 18:23 Neither shall you lie with any beast [Are we talking about eating food here?] to defile yourself therewith

This is exactly the same word that is used in Leviticus 11:44. Now is the defilement only ceremonial? Absolutely not. It is a spiritual defilement.

Go now to Ezekiel 22. The sins of Jerusalem are being described.

Ezekiel 22:11 And one has committed abomination with his neighbor's wife; and another has lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in you has humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

We are talking about very serious spiritual sins—the breaking of the Ten Commandments. The word that is translated "defiled" in all of these scriptures is [transliterated] *tameh*, and it is used for spiritual defilements. When you or I eat something that God has not designated as food for us, we are not only ceremonially defiling ourselves, we are spiritually defiling ourselves.

Now what would God accept, and what is acceptable food for His children?

Leviticus 1:2-3 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

I am going to read this to you the way the NIV translates it, because it is much clearer.

If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord.

To be acceptable, the offering must be without defect. It must be unblemished. There are three things that God requires: 1) The offering had to be made from the flock or the herd. 2) It had to be male for the burnt offering. 3) It had to be without blemish.

The next question has to be then: Does God designate what animals are acceptable from the flock and the herd? Yes. In order to cut this short, I will tell you it could only be a bullock, a goat, a sheep, a turtledove, or oxen for the burnt offering. Every one of them appears on the list in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. All the animals specifically designated as "clean" in Leviticus 11 and 14, even of those, they are the only animals that are acceptable.

There is a conclusion here. God wants *those* who want to obey *Him* to eat *only* those animals that He Himself would eat. Is that not clear?

This is an example that only what He gives, that is, what He sanctifies—in this case food for us—is acceptable to Him as an offering. Now some of those animals are acceptable for us to eat, but they are not acceptable as offerings because not very many people are going to have a roe buck around that they could offer, and not many people are going to have a water buffalo, which is a clean animal. You know what I mean. Those animals are clean, but they are not acceptable, and so God did not designate them.

God back to I Corinthians again. We are flipping back and forth between the Old and the New Testament because we can see that there is a parallel that is running through here.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Today, God's children are the temple of the living God. Back in the days when He gave those laws regarding these offerings and sacrifices, He was symbolically pictured as living inside the Tabernacle, living inside the Holy of Holies of both the Tabernacle and the Temple. Those two buildings are no longer extant. They are no longer working institutions. Under the New Covenant, God *lives* in His children. He has taken up a dwelling place in His children, and so now His children are the temple of the living God. His Most Holy Place is in His elect children; therefore, we should keep our bodies pure both physically and spiritually, just as He instructed the Israelites to keep His Temple and Tabernacle, and His Holy Place undefiled while He was dwelling there.

Are you aware that God even had the Israelites bury their excrement? They had to carry a shovel with them, and He even told them why. "Because I walk through your camp." He did not want to get that stuff on His feet. You understand.

I Corinthians 3:16-17 Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Here is that word *defile*. This time it is translated from the Greek rather than from the Hebrew, but the intent, the meaning, is the same.

Now how can one defile the temple of God within the context, the framework, of this subject? A historical example is when Antiochus Epiphanes defiled the Temple in Jerusalem by offering swine's flesh on God's altar—His table—in 167 BC. If pork would defile God's Temple then, it will defile God's temple today. *We are God's temple.*

Now is that a spiritual sin that Antiochus Epiphanes did when he did what he did in Jerusalem? It most certainly was. For us to eat unclean things is a spiritual sin that defiles the temple of the living God. We are *holy*, and we are *charged* by God to keep ourselves holy, because *He* is holy.

The book of Leviticus is primarily instruction for the priesthood, and the church is a priesthood in training to be sure, but it is nonetheless designated by God as a priesthood. The divisions in the book of Leviticus are quite clear. Chapters 1 through 7 detail the sacrifices. Chapters 8 through 10 cover the installation of the priests. Chapters 11 through 16 contain the laws of purity. That is where the "law of food" appears—what is, and what is not food. Chapters 17 through 26 contain the "laws of holiness" which are given so that we can maintain purity of the holiness that God has conferred upon us.

The holiness of God is clearly given as the reason for the laws of purity, including the "clean foods" regulations. The laws of purity are object lessons that clearly set Israel apart; not only Israel, but now spiritual Israel as well, set apart from other nations and other churches. These laws teach us that the holy God, and therefore the holiness of His children, cannot coexist with the uncleanness of the world. The two do not mix.

Let us go now to Acts 10. The main characters here are God, Peter, and the vision that was given. Peter saw heaven open and a certain vessel descending unto him

Acts 10:11-14 And [Peter] saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill, and eat. but Peter said, Not so, Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

Peter did not know that those things were "all cleaned up."

Acts 10:15 And the voice spoke unto him again the second time, What God has cleansed, that call not you common.

It is interesting that He did not mention "unclean." Peter did not understand what he saw and what he heard, and it was not until further activities took place—the meeting with the messengers which came from Cornelius—that the light dawned in his brain. But the instruction is obvious to us, and it

means then that except for those whom God cleanses through His calling and the blood of Jesus Christ, therefore making them holy and acceptable to Him—all others are unclean. They are unholy. They are unacceptable as His children. In a New Testament sense they are strangers. They are still defiled. They are not recognized by Him.

The laws of clean and unclean teach us that we are separate from the world. We are holy. We are set apart. We are different, and when that is combined with the sacrificial laws, one finds that only animals designated as clean and unblemished are acceptable as an offering. Romans 12:1-2 says that we are *living sacrifices* , and therefore we are clean only as God has cleaned us, and that God has charged us with the responsibility of keeping ourselves clean.

Let us go now to the book of Haggai and we will touch on this just briefly. God wants Haggai to give the priests a test to see what kind of response He is going to get from them.

Haggai 2:11-12 Thus says the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread [meaning food], or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? . . .

In other words, he is carrying something in his skirt that is already sanctified by God as acceptable, and then what he is carrying comes in contact with something that is, we will say, "common," or we will say "unclean." Shall then that which was touched be considered as holy, as clean? The priests answered correctly. "No."

Haggai 2:12-13 . . . And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? . . .

Shall one who is unclean touch something that is clean, holy, shall it be unclean? The priests again answered correctly. They said, "It shall be unclean."

Haggai 2:13-14 . . . And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, says the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

These people had made themselves unholy through sin. They were defiled, and then every offering that they offered to God on His holy altar was considered unclean, because the people were not clean.

I thought of a simple illustration that will help you to understand this test. If I come to you and I have grease on my hands—dirty grease that I got from working on the engine of my automobile—and your hands are clean because you just came from the kitchen and you had just washed your hands and they are spotless, they are clean, and I shake your hands with my dirty hands, what happens?

My defiled—my dirty, my unholy hands—make your clean hands dirty, defiled, abominable, but your clean hands do not render my dirty hands clean. Dirt transfers. Cleanliness does not. That is the point of the question that Haggai asks. Therefore God said, "Don't defile your clean, holy body by eating anything that is unclean." Of course by extension, "Don't involve yourself in sin of any kind if you want your offerings to be acceptable. “

We are therefore only to eat the flesh of those animals God designated, those He set apart, clearly recognized as food for His holy children, lest we become spiritually defiled and unacceptable. He will only accept as an offering those things He has so designated as food for His table.

Through these four sermons, and now into this fifth one, I am going to give a summary of things that we have learned. I am doing this to bridge over into the application of these principles to Pentecost, and specifically to Joshua 5: 10-12. I have given you a great deal of preparation to get to this point, and I have done this because there is a very sad, disturbing lack of appreciation of the holiness code and of the purity laws that God gives in His Word, and these things exist within the church of God and they are showing up in cases like this.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives you. You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

We have learned that God has given explicit instruction regarding the spirit, the intent, of how He wants us to worship Him. Each of the regulations depicted in this is tailored to His overall purpose of reproducing Himself in us. *Everything* has a specific purpose toward this end, even as men produce a multitude of policies, regulations, procedures, and recipes aimed at producing certain results, and if the policies and the procedures are not followed, the results will not be what is desired. So is it with God, and that is why He says, "Don't add or take away from what I have said, because I want things to turn out right for *you* —[meaning us]."

Let us go to Joshua 1:8. Here they were, in Joshua 1, right on the cusp of the Promised Land, so God gave Joshua a pep talk. He said:

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law [and it is very likely that He meant the whole five books that Moses had written] shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: . . .

He does *not* say to Joshua, "I'm giving you the authority to make adjustments to suit situations that *you* might think adjustments need to be made."

Joshua 1:8 . . . For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.

Apply the spirit of what He had said there to Joshua to you and to me today. When we follow God's instructions explicitly, it is for our good, that we might be successful in the calling wherewith He has called us. But there is another reason that is directly tied to this that is given in Proverbs 30:5.

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Following the stipulations that God gave protects us, so we have not only success, but we are kept from harm. We are kept from injury along the way of the pilgrimage that we are involved in.

These two verses, and the things that we are talking about, all boil down in practical application to whether we *trust* Him, and whether we *respect* Him and His Word enough to submit to them, even though we do not have all of the answers at any given time. Faith and the fear of the Lord are thus intimately involved in holiness; not only maintaining holiness, but also increasing holiness. Therefore this gives rise to the importance of the terms *sanctify*, *sanctified*, and *sanctification*.

Sanctification by God qualifies certain people and certain objects and certain responsibilities to His worship and service. Those whom God has set apart are expected to carry out commanded responsibilities. However, though they indeed may be set apart and qualified for *one* responsibility, it does not automatically qualify them for another. Remember I Corinthians 12. God places people in the body as it pleases *Him* .

If you think back to the building of the tabernacle in Exodus 35 and 36, and so forth, God appointed Bezaleel and Aholiab, and nobody else, to do the job of overseeing the construction of the tabernacle. God appointed craftsmen and artisans—men and women—to carry out certain responsibilities, and they were not qualified to do what Bezaleel and Aholiab did, and none of them, including Bezaleel and Aholiab, were qualified, sanctified by God, to do Moses' job or Aaron's job. That is plain, is it not? The same principle holds through to the church of God, and I will get to clarifying scriptures to that for that principle in just a little bit.

If such a one attempts to perform a responsibility that he is not set apart for, he is then called *strange* or *a stranger* in the Bible. These terms then indicate he is not authentic. He is not certified. He is not recognized by God, and therefore unqualified.

This same principle holds true regarding sanctified things. Only those things sanctified by God are authentic and qualified to be used in worshipping and serving Him, and anything substituted in the authentic thing's place is called *strange*, *profane*, *defiled*, or *abominable*. The substitutes are not acceptable and are sometimes shown in the Old Testament record as rejected in very dramatic ways by God.

Many of the sanctified things, like the fire under the altar, symbolically represent God, and when they are rejected, refused, or abused, it is the same thing to God as rejecting Him. Do you know this principle shows up in the New Testament? Jesus said in Luke 10:16, "He who rejects you [meaning the twelve He was going to send out] rejects Me and rejects God." This is the same principle exactly, only in a New Testament setting.

Just in case you think God's attitude regarding what He requires might have changed now that we are under the New Covenant (and grace is being so emphasized by this world's Christianity), it might be good if you would remember Hebrews 13:8 where it says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever." The same God who gave the laws in the Old Covenant is the same God who hands down the regulations and the principles under the New Covenant, and He expects us to follow through. Maybe ceremonies have been changed since the Temple is no longer in existence, and since the Old Covenant priesthood is no longer in existence. There is nobody qualified to offer those kinds of offerings. Not even God's children are qualified to offer those offerings.

God's standards are not lowered one iota, and it is this way because His character is eternal, and it is His creation, and He wants His creation to produce the results that He desires. It is ***HIS will be done***, not ours, regardless of whether we think that He is fair or unfair. God desires worship

in spirit and truth, and so we worship in the right intent, using the same basic principles that appear under the Old Covenant, but the truths of the New Covenant are added to the truths that are given in the Old Covenant.

Another thing that we learned in this series of sermons is that man cannot make anything holy. Men can declare things set apart, as they do with Sunday as a day of worship, but Sunday is not holy as the day that God set apart, sanctified. Right at the beginning of the book it says that "God made the Sabbath holy." Even before you get through the second chapter, He has already designated that.

Only a holy God can make things truly holy, and therefore He specifically stipulates that only certain censers made to His specifications be used in the worship of Him. Only coals from a certain fire, and only a strictly specified incense formula, and only the animals from a list made by Him are acceptable to be sacrificed, and they are to be sacrificed only on the brazen altar according to the plans given Moses by Him.

The only altar that stands before the only Tabernacle or Temple designed by Him was placed only where He stipulated. In addition, specific offerings are to be made at a specific time of the day, of the month, and of the year.

As I said in an earlier sermon, I do not know in every case why He has stipulated that such and such be done, but I do understand that one of the major practical effects of this is that ***only the things that the holy God has given us within our covenant family relationship with Him are acceptable as offerings given back to Him*** .

Let us put together a series of four scriptures here. I am not going to comment on them too much because they are so familiar to every one of you. We are going to begin with what is operating in our lives.

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Do we believe that? No man can come to God unless God draws him.

Turn now to Psalm 104 because this is what begins to take place. This is the same thing that happened when God began to renew the face of the earth.

Psalm 104:30 You send forth your spirit, they are created: and you renew the face of the earth.

Only in our case, God sends forth His Spirit, and *we* become a new creation. Only those that God calls meet this qualification. Only those to whom God sends forth His Spirit can be created in Christ Jesus.

I Corinthians 2:10 But God has revealed them unto us by his spirit: for the spirit searches all things, yes the deep things of God.

As a result of the calling—the invitation by God—His Spirit is sent forth, and we begin to be stirred as a result as God begins to reveal Himself and His purpose to us, and we begin the process of creation in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:5 And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us.

As we begin to be created in Christ Jesus, the spirit of the Lord brings with it love—God's love—God's holy love. And what does God expect us to do with that love? We are becoming holy as a result of the activities of God. He expects us to make use of that holy love and start giving it back to Him in the form of sacrifices—in the form of the sacrifice of our life in submitting to Him in obedience and in acts of good works toward our brethren.

Romans 5:6-11 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the

death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

What we have here is a vivid New Testament example. Our calling, by means of His Spirit, revealed the true God and His purpose to us. In a very personal way it empowers us to grasp the importance of His demonstration of His love toward us in the sinless mortal life, the sacrificial death as our Savior, and the resurrected life of Jesus Christ as our High Priest.

One of the fruits of this is that His love is formed within us, and this love forms only as a result of the knowledge and the understanding produced by His revelation aided by His Holy Spirit. He gives us His love, and then we give a portion back to Him in practical application in the form of worship, service, and submission in obedience.

All of these elements come into play in regard to the Wavesheaf offering and to Pentecost. God gives us a crop to harvest, and we give a portion of it back to Him in tithes and offerings. The Wavesheaf offering thus acknowledges that God was the Author and the Giver of the land's crops.

Turn now to Joshua 5 and we will rehearse this.

Joshua 5:10-12 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land: neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

I want you to notice first of all that there is no mention of the Wavesheaf offering despite the fact that it is clearly stated that they ate the produce of the land. The observation of the first Passover in the Promised Land is mentioned, but not what would have been the first *ever* —not just the first Wavesheaf offering in the land, but the first *ever* Wavesheaf offering. It

would have been the first ever, because it was never offered after the command was given to Moses, because the command was given in the wilderness, and the Israelites never had any land, nor farms, nor planted any crops in the wilderness; thus they had no grain qualified according to the directions given in the command.

I would think that because of this Joshua 5 event that was such a significant occasion, that if a Wavesheaf offering was made, it would be mentioned right along with the Passover. But it is not, because they did not do it. It is completely and totally an assumption that Israel made the offering. They did not do it for a very simple reason. They could not lawfully do it according to the command, because just as in the wilderness, they had no grain that qualified for the offering, nor could they make the burnt offering that was also commanded to accompany the Wavesheaf offering. That burnt offering is *clearly* stated in Leviticus 23, that it had to be made *with* , it had to accompany at the same time the Wavesheaf offering was made.

Now there are two good reasons why the Wavesheaf offering was not made. They did not have any grain, and they could not possibly do that burnt offering, because Deuteronomy 12 absolutely forbids it. The accompanying burnt offering had to be made *only* at the altar that was at the door of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was not there because God, in Deuteronomy 12, stipulated "I don't want you making offerings every place until we get to the place where I have appointed you to place the Tabernacle." That did not happen for seven years.

Joshua could not possibly, lawfully, make that offering, and I am absolutely certain that Joshua remembered Nadab and Abihu, and he did not want to get lightning struck and burnt to a crisp. The Bible does not show Joshua being any sort of a man like that who would make a substitution. That man spent it seems virtually every day for forty years with Moses, and he knew which end was up. I am sure that he knew the offerings inside and out, besides having the reminder from God—"You do it the way I have told you. Don't add. Don't subtract. Do it just the way I told you, and you're going to have success."

Did Joshua have success? It took seven years, but they got the land under Joshua. They had success.

Exodus 23:16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of *your* labors, which *you have sown* [planted] in the field.

Here are two clear stipulations from God qualifying what was acceptable, what was authentic, what was recognizable, what was *not* strange in the way of a Wavesheaf offering. I do not see how this can be gainsaid, but people are scoffingly shoving it aside as if it means nothing.

You can add to this, to clarify just a little bit more, that this had to be the labors of the *covenant* people. This is important in just a little bit. You might wonder why I am concentrating on this. It is because this is what the majority of the people have rejected my paper on. What they are saying is, "Any old offering would do." "Anything could be substituted." Turn now to Deuteronomy 8.

Deuteronomy 8:1-2 All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, . . .

Again, "*ALL the way* !" And again that included Nadab and Abihu. That included Dathan, Korah, Abiram, and the things that took place there in Numbers 16 through 18, and the things that took place in Numbers 14 when they refused to go into the land.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 . . . You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove [test] you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled you, and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.

Now, is Exodus 23:16—"your labors, which you have planted"—part of *every word* of God that we are to live by? "But by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live."

I am sure that Joshua did not forget, and that is why no Wavesheaf offering appears in Joshua 5. So reflect: Did God care enough regarding the incense altar and the incense that He even warned that if anybody makes any of that incense for his private use He says, "I will put them to death"?

Did God care enough about *where* the fire came from when He killed Nadab and Abihu? That fire did not come from under His altar. It did not qualify.

Did God care enough about who offered the sacrifices that He killed almost fifteen thousand people as a demonstration to you and me that He takes His commands—His appointments—seriously and He wants them to be followed?

Did God care enough for you and me that He does not want us to eat things that will defile us and make us unholy?

What else does He have to *do* to show us that we should take Him seriously about holiness?

Some dissenters make the argument that once Israel entered the land that God gave them and the things growing on it, that it became lawful for them to offer it. Brethren, not so. First of all, that still does not eliminate the requirements that are laid down in other places.

I will agree with a portion of this accusation that God would accept the Canaanite grain, that it was good enough simply because Israel was in the land and because God had given them the products of the land. Yes, they were allowed to eat it, but that is a far cry from offering it to Him as an offering. The Israelites were allowed to use coals from any old fire to cook, or to bake, or to keep themselves warm, but when it came to making an offering to Him, then it had to be *special*, as God-stipulated coals.

The same principle holds true in regard to the Wavesheaf offering. They could eat it, but they could not use it as an offering. It was not holy. Now this leads to something that is *extremely serious* in this supposition that the Canaanite grain would be acceptable to God, because Genesis 12:1-3 states:

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you: And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Here is the beginning of the promise.

Genesis 13:14-15 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed for ever.

Now the promise not only includes Abraham, but also his seed as well. Let us cut this short by leaping all the way to the New Testament to Galatians 3:16.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seed *s* [plural], as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ.

Brethren, the inheritor of the promise was *Jesus Christ* . He is the *seed* of Abraham. He is not the seed of Canaanites. The inheritor of the seed had to be a descendant that came from Abraham or God's promise is yet unfilled. Well, the Bible says it *is* filled, and the single legal inheritor is Jesus Christ; but He in turn is going to share *His* inheritance with all of the children of Abraham.

Now recall that the Wavesheaf offering had to come from seed which the Israelites had planted. Are you beginning to see where I am headed? Are you beginning to see why it had to be planted by an Israelite? It is because the Israelites were the descendants of Abraham. They only, and the seed which they planted, were qualified. If you see the parallel, the seed was passed through sperm to a woman's egg all the way down through history till we get to Jesus Christ. That seed that was in Mary and was impregnated by God then became the Inheritor of the promise. Did He do that with any Canaanites? **NEVER!** A descendant of Abraham was involved all the way down the line.

Jesus Christ was *the first of the firstfruits* of God's spiritual harvest. He was the first of the firstfruits of God's purpose, and according to that promise the seed had to be a direct descendant of Abraham. So if the grain the Canaanites planted was acceptable as a Wavesheaf offering, then it symbolically portrayed Jesus Christ as coming from the seed of Canaanites.

IMPOSSIBLE! according to God's Word. But it even gets worse than that.

Turn to Leviticus 18. Remember, these are the laws of holiness showing how we can maintain holiness.

Leviticus 18:24-25 Defile not yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled [and Canaan was part of the nations] which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomits out her inhabitants.

Ezekiel 36:17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

The sum of this is that God considered everything that pertained to the Canaanites as defiled, as abominable, as unclean, as unacceptable, including the people, their conduct, their attitudes, and even the *soil*. "The whole land," He said, "is defiled," meaning everything within it. Of course that would mean their harvest too. As far as God is concerned, it was defiled in

terms of making an offering from it. It was okay to eat, but it was defiled as far as offerings were concerned.

Now does God want any of these things symbolically representing His Son?

Leviticus 22:24 You shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall you make any offering thereof in your land. Neither from a stranger's hand shall you offer the bread of your God [that which is offered on the altar] of any of these; because their corruption [their defilement, their impurity] is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you.

This is why I spent so much time on the term "stranger." God would not accept an offering from anybody being a stranger, whether that person was a foreigner, or even a native-born Israelite who was uncircumcised. The offerings had to come from a covenant people, and that includes the Wavesheaf offering.

Recall, a stranger is anyone unrecognized as authentic and approved by God. Symbolically they were not cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and they were therefore defiled and corrupted. Their corruption is perceived as making the offering also defiled. Remember the transference. Unholy people make unholy offerings because the defilement of the unholy people is transferred to the offering.

It is sheer nonsense on the part of some to say that this only applied to things sacrificed on the altar as food for Him, and it is as though any old grain was acceptable as food, but as meat, that had to be perfect. They **both** had to be perfect. Both grain and meat. That is strange reasoning to avoid being corrected.

Of course far more important in all of this is the spiritual application. Jesus is represented in every ceremony in the Old Covenant only by the **best**, and in this case, that "only" which was planted by and labored over by circumcised Israelites on their own land was holy and therefore considered acceptable.

The Worldwide Church of God attempted, as now do some of the splits, to force the Wavesheaf offering to always be inside the Days of Unleavened Bread in a vain and unnecessary attempt to duplicate the fact that Jesus was resurrected in a year in which that occurred. But neither the calendar nor the Wavesheaf regulations will permit that always to occur.

Brethren, it does not matter whether the Wavesheaf offering always falls within the Days of Unleavened Bread because the Wavesheaf offering is not an Unleavened Bread symbol. It is a *harvest* symbol. The Days of Unleavened Bread do not symbolize a harvest.

Now listen to this. Passover symbolizes spiritual liberty from bondage to sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. The Days of Unleavened Bread symbolize the God-given spiritual, political, and civil liberty from slavery to spiritual, political, and civil oppression. Pentecost symbolizes the harvest of spiritual and physical prosperity that God-given liberties produce. Pentecost symbolizes a harvest. The Wavesheaf harvest symbolizes the beginning of the same harvest that Pentecost ends. The Wavesheaf is attached to Pentecost, not to the Days of Unleavened Bread. There is absolutely no authority given in Joshua 5 to support the Worldwide Church of God's conclusion.

Israel kept the Passover at the beginning of the 14th as we do today. Twenty-four 24 hours later they observed the Night To Be Much Observed, as we do today, as a celebration of the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham—a promise given *exactly* 470 years to the day that they celebrated that first Night To Be Much Observed in the Promised Land in Joshua 5. It was *then*, in celebration of the Night To Be Much Observed, as well as the promise given to Abraham, that they ate the produce of the Promised Land a full ten to twelve hours before the Worldwide Church of God says Israel made the Wavesheaf offering—an offering which they could not make because they had no grain that qualified for that offering, and an offering, that according to the Worldwide Church of God, they made on a holy day Sabbath in defiance of God's command in Leviticus 23:11, that it had to be made on the day *after* the Sabbath. That is so clear, brethren.

In conclusion, anybody who kept Pentecost this year on May 27 was wrong. Herbert Armstrong had it right in the first place as to when to begin to count to Pentecost. His only mistake was in not counting as a Hebrew-speaking person would have naturally counted; that is, inclusively, beginning with the first day. He would have begun on a Sunday and ended on a Sunday.

Brethren, there was no Wavesheaf offering in Joshua 5.