

# **THE POWER OF PENTECOST**

Acts 2:1

If you go back and read the Old Testament, you will discover that Pentecost was one of the Jewish feast days. Only they didn't call it Pentecost. That's the Greek name. The Jews called it the **Feast of Harvest** or the **Feast of Weeks**. It is mentioned five places in the first five books—in Exodus 23, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16. It was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Israel there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall. **Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest, which meant that Pentecost always fell sometime during the middle of the month of May or sometimes in early June.**

There were several festivals, celebrations, or observances that took place before Pentecost. There was **Passover**, there was **Unleavened Bread**, and there was the **Feast of Firstfruits**. The Feast of Firstfruits was the celebration of the beginning of the barley harvest. Here's the way you figured out the date of Pentecost. **According to the Old Testament, you would go to the day of the celebration of Firstfruits, and beginning with that day, you would count off 50 days. The fiftieth day would be the Day of Pentecost.** So Firstfruits is the beginning of the barley harvest and Pentecost the celebration of the beginning of the wheat harvest. Since it was always 50 days after Firstfruits, and since 50 days equals seven weeks, it always came a "week of weeks" later. Therefore, they either called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. Source: *Christianity.com*

Notice three powerful things that took place on the Day of Pentecost.

## **I. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:1-13)**

The Holy Spirit's coming was promised by Jesus.

1. See John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:5-14
2. See Acts 1:4-5, 8
3. Acts 2:1-4
  - Sound. "A mighty rushing wind."
  - Sight. "Tongues of fire."
  - Speech. "Began to speak in other tongues" ["languages", see vs. 6, 8. 11]

## II. **THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL** (Acts 2:14-40)

Peter's sermon is the classic of evangelistic addresses.

1. He begins with an *explanation* (vs. 14-21)
  - "These people are not drunk" (v. 15)
  - "This is what was spoken by Joel" (v. 16)
2. He continues with a *proclamation* (vs. 22-24)
  - "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works, wonders, and signs" (miracles)
3. He makes an *accusation* (v. 23)
  - "You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men"
  - Peter does not shrink from saying "you."
4. He proceeds with a *disputation* (v. 25-35)
  - He shows how the facts of Jesus' life fit in with OT prophecies
  - David's prediction that Messiah would sit on his throne and that God would not abandon Him to the grave.
5. Peter builds to a *declaration* (v. 36)
  - "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified!"
  - This is the grand climax of the sermon.
6. He offers an *invitation* (vs. 37-38)
  - "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." [Pardon & Power]
  - This invitation is extended to future generations: "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who far off [Gentiles], everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."
7. He concludes with an *exhortation* (v. 40)
  - "And with many other words he bore witness and exhorted them, saying 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.'"

Notice 4 things about this magnificent message: (1) It appealed to Scripture as authoritative. (2) It centered in Jesus Christ. (3) It brought conviction to the hearers. (4) It called for an immediate and definite response. Source: *The Christian Persuader*, Leighton Ford.

## III. **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH** (Acts 2:41-47)

Look at the powerful effect of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the gospel.

John R. W. Stott says, "The Holy Spirit opened a school that day in Jerusalem. Its teachers were the apostles whom Jesus had appointed. Its students were the 3,000 who were baptized."

1. It was a *learning* church. "They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching" (v. 42)
2. It was a *loving* church. "They devoted themselves to ... fellowship" (v. 42).
3. It was a *worshipping* church. "They devoted themselves to "the breaking of bread [Communion] and to the prayers. (v. 42).
4. It was an *evangelistic* church. "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (v. 47).

This Spirit-filled church also enjoyed great relationships:

1. They were related to *the apostles* (in submission), anxious to believe and obey what Jesus and the apostles taught.
2. They were related to *each other* (in love), caring and sharing with all who had need.
3. They were related to *God* (in worship), in the temple and in homes, in the Lord's Supper and in prayers.
4. They were related to *the world* (in outreach), engaged in continuous evangelism. "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (5:42).

Conclusion: The power of Pentecost came from the promised Holy Spirit, the preaching of the gospel, and the establishment of the church. Just as the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus when He was baptized, so the Holy Spirit came upon the church when they were baptized. James says, "the body apart from the spirit is dead" (James 2:26). The body of Christ, the church, apart from the Spirit is also dead. The Spirit-filled church will offer what people need today: biblical teaching, loving fellowship, living worship, and ongoing, outgoing evangelism.