

Pentecost What's That?

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Pentecost—What's That?

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CHAPTER ONE

Pentecost Promised

The hammer of truth struck the anvil of time, sparks flew, and answering fires broke out across the then known world. Pentecost—what did it mean then, and what does it mean now? In the most literal sense, the word is a bald term of arithmetic. It simply means fifty. Why is it that this one word from the numerical galaxy is the preeminent religious star in the world today?

There are theologians who would relegate the Pentecostal blessing to the fringe fanatics and their fellow travelers of the twentieth century. But, let us lay aside any preconceived notions and look deeply into the Word of God for the promise of Pentecost. To limit the experience of Pentecost to an experience shared by the emotional fanatic and the self-educated theologian, and to claim that

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it is an experience unique to the twentieth century, is to do grave injustice to the Holy Bible.

Pentecost was a Hebrew feast of the Old Testament. It was known as the *Feast of the Weeks* or the *Feast of Pentecost*. Regardless of the name used in reference to Hebrew history, seven weeks plus one day after Passover brought Pentecost. The reason for the celebration was two-fold: it commemorated the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and it also marked the end of the wheat harvest.

Though it was one of Israel's leading holidays, what it foreshadowed was more than a one-day festivity. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit that took place on the Day of Pentecost, in the second chapter of the Book of Acts, was not only prophesied and promised in the Old Testament, but it was prefigured by every Feast of Pentecost that had preceded it. The three-fold cord of Old Testament prophecy is not easily broken.

Interwoven with the promise of Jesus' first Advent and His second Advent is the strong strand of the promise of Pentecost. It was of this promise that Peter spoke when he said in I Peter 1:10-12. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify . . . Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the

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Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

From the preceding passage we determine that the promise of Pentecost was ushered in with the beginning of time. News of this glorious event even penetrated into the realm of the angels. The taproot of the Pentecostal promise predates Malachi, reaches back through Jeremiah, and even precedes all but the very first verse of Genesis. It enters into the age when the Sons of God shouted for joy at the dawn of creation. Yes, even in the *Beginning* the promise of Pentecost lived, for the Bible declares that Jesus was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). This perfect and eternal substitutionary sacrifice was that which made a fulfilled promise of Pentecost possible.

Pentecost originated in the mind of the Divine Godhead who has declared the end from the beginning. Since angels had knowledge of the promise of the Holy Spirit, and inasmuch as prophets of old spoke of it, we are on scriptural grounds to allow it to co-exist with the promises of the first and second Advent of Jesus Christ. To the average citizen of Israel, the priesthood had a monopoly on God. How those Jews must have longed for the hour that Peter spoke of—when all believers would become members of not just a priesthood, but a royal priesthood. Little did the man on the street expect to participate in any deep spiritual experience.

In II Peter 1:21 we read, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake