

The Day of Pentecost

Key Verse: “*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.*”
—Acts 2:39, *New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Acts 2:1-42

THE DAY OF PENTECOST might, with propriety, be recognized as the day of the birth of the Christian church. That day bore witness to a wondrous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Christ’s disciples had gathered together “with one accord in one place.” (Acts 2:1) There surely must have been an air of great expectancy among them. Reflecting on the earlier words

of Jesus, who “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; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”—Acts 1:4,5, *NKJV*

Jesus’ words echoed and amplified those previously spoken to the disciples when they were gathered together after Emmaus. “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49, *NKJV*) “Power from on high”—what did that mean, and how would they know? What would they then be empowered to do? Their questions would soon be answered.

The day we now refer to as Pentecost was commonly known to the people of Israel as The Feast of Harvest or The Feast of Weeks. (Exod. 23:16; 34:22) The celebration

was timed to coincide with the harvest of the firstfruits of spring grain. It was one of the feasts of Israel that required attendance at Jerusalem for worship at the Temple. This was a masterful stroke of God's omniscience. On that day Jews from all around the known world would be present. In God's great wisdom, many witnessed the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit on that day. The result was a worldwide dissemination, by many witnesses, of the new era in God's plan for man. That era continues to the present day and is manifested by the "fruit of the spirit" in Christ's followers. —Gal. 5:22,23

Such fruitage is a powerful evidence both of Christ's resurrection and the authenticity of the Christian faith. Peter declared, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 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." (Acts 2:32,33, *NKJV*) Our Key Verse notes that the promise of the Holy Spirit is "to you [Israel] and to your children, and to all who are afar off." We who were once "far off" have also been blessed by the spirit working in us as Apostle Paul observed, "The gospel ... is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." —Rom. 1:16, *New International Version*

The risen Lord Jesus opened "a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." (Heb. 10:20-23, *NKJV*) The promise remains even now to us who once were far off. May we always find strength and encouragement in this assurance. ■