

PENTECOST

A Guide for Christian Understanding and Celebration

COME JOIN US:
MARION BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
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I will Send My Spirit, and Write My Law Upon Their Hearts

**GOD HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED
FOR THOSE WHO SERVE HIM**

PENTECOST BEFORE CHRIST - CALLING OUT AND PURIFYING A PEOPLE

Pentecost or Shavuot (Sha-vu-'ote meaning "weeks" in Hebrew) is the second harvest festival. As you recall, there was a festival of the smaller barley harvest that followed Passover. Shavuot was to celebrate the larger harvest of the wheat in the land. Both are referred to as "First Fruits".

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PENTECOST AT THE TIME OF CHRIST - THE PROMISE AND SENDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The history of God's people has been illustrated by times of obedience and times of disobedience. This single fact keeps the kingdom He has established in heaven from being fully realized on earth. From the beginning, God prescribed a solution to our rebellion: sending of His Spirit to

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PENTECOST IN THE FUTURE - EVERYONE KNOWS THE LORD AND HIS WAYS

Have you ever wondered whether the world will ever straighten its ways and live for the Lord?

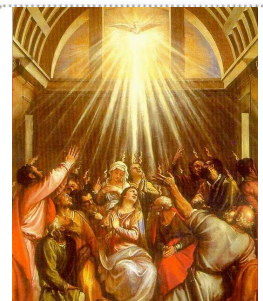
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Preparing the First of the Wheat Harvest for Offering



The Giving of the Torah



The Giving of the Holy Spirit

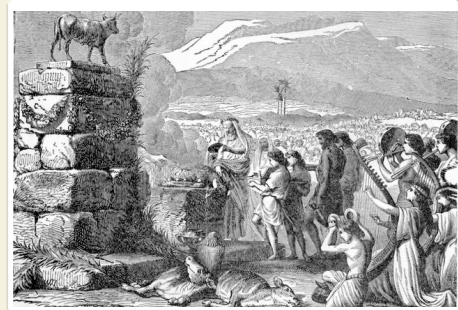
The primary items of Pentecost are Wheat to symbolize God's provision of food, the Giving of the Law on Sinai as guidance for His people, and the giving of the Spirit to Christ's followers to cause them to live for Him.

“Now, Mt. Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire”

Exodus 19:18

“About 3000 men of the people fell that day.”

Exodus 32:28



PENTECOST BEFORE CHRIST - CALLING OUT A PEOPLE (from page 1)

The basic reminder of these harvest festivals were to remind the people that we are to remember always that God is the provider of all we have. As you know, we pray similarly over our offering each week at church. The concept of tithing, where 10% of what we gain is given to God before we use the rest for other purposes is similar to that of these harvest festivals. The prescription for celebrating this holiday is to bring an offering of the first grain ready to harvest to the Lord and present it before Him with thanksgiving. Only after that could the grain harvested in the land be used by the people. This may be compared to the man who takes time to pray before eating a meal: He is thankful and credits the Lord for what he has, only eating after such thanks is given (Recall in this that as you pray, it is correct to bless and thank God for the food, instead of the common practice of asking a blessing on the food itself. The food is provided to you by God and He does not need to do something additional. Simply thank Him for what He has given: “Lord we bless (thank) you for this food you have provided.”

Beyond the straightforward meaning of a thanksgiving offering to God, there is an additional message in Pentecost that

is later realized in our Messiah, Jesus, and

the church that bears His name. As has been mentioned, the people of God have always been challenged with the concept of desiring to follow God’s ways as opposed to their own ways and the ways of Satan and the world. Therefore, not only did the Lord provide for our physical needs, he provided what was necessary for our obedience and service to Him as well.

Long ago, as Moses (Heb. “Moshee”) was called by God to receive His teaching on Mount Sinai (Heb. “See-Nay”), a sort of “first Pentecost” occurred. In a mix of lightning, wind and fire, the Law was given to Moses to deliver to the people of God. Not all that were to receive that Law at the base of the mountain were descended from Jacob (Israel), but a mix of Jews and Gentiles had come out of Egypt in the Exodus. So this Law, meant for all who would follow the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was to guide the people in their walk with Him. But no sooner did Moses arrive to deliver this guiding Law to the people that he found them following their own hearts which created a way of life and worship that was not pleasing to God. They may have been quite sincere and well-intentioned in their ways personally, but because of their trust in creating ways that were

contrary to His law, God became quite angry. The beginning of this story is

found in Exodus 19: 18 - 25 and has its conclusion in Exodus 32: 1-28. The story of the giving of the Law as a guide to life and the practice of our faith, contrasted with the example of how we are misled to the point of displeasing God as we would follow our own heart instead of God’s Written Word is the intended message of this section of Scripture. Because of their sincere, but wrong, way of worshipping and living for God, 3000 people died that day. God had judged His people in their disobedience. Remember this number (3000) as we later explore the “second Pentecost” as presented in the book of Acts.

Try as they might, even after that day of receiving and committing to follow the teaching given by God to His people on Sinai, disobedience was a regular feature throughout their history. It is also a regular feature of our life. Being given a list of rights and wrongs without changing our heart and basic nature will



Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind...Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them' (Acts 2:2-3)

PENTECOST AT THE TIME OF AND AFTER CHRIST - THE PROMISE TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT *(from page 1)*

guide us.

The annual celebration of Pentecost (Shavuot) is a commandment found in the book of Exodus and Leviticus as one of the seven Feasts of the Lord. It is the fourth and final Spring feast, after which there is a long waiting period until the first of three fall feasts. Leading up to Pentecost we have celebrated Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits (of barley). These three feasts set a symbol in place for Christ's death (Passover) and resurrection (First Fruits) as well as the holy life He lived (and we should live) - Unleavened Bread. These first three feasts are fulfilled (not cancelled) in Christ's first coming. They illustrate how a blood sacrifice was needed to pay the penalty for our sin and disobedience to God's Law (Torah). Therefore, in these first three feasts we have a picture of God's plan for our salvation: purchasing us back from the death sentence we were under by sending Jesus Christ to receive the judgement that we actually deserved. Our resurrections follow His own as we are the "first fruits" of a saved people.

Our salvation is not offered without the expectation of a transformed life unto obedience to the commandments we before were powerless to obey. Freedom in Christ is a term the Bible uses to assure us that we now are members of a New Covenant. What New Covenant? The covenant that God foreknew was needed to have His people desire to walk in His ways and stop their repeated rebellion. Herein lies the message

of Pentecost. Let's discuss this New Covenant ("agreement" between God and Man) further because it relates to the Old Covenant made through Moses, and it is miraculously transforming in a way the Old Covenant never could be. So as this Old "agreement" fades, a newer and much better agreement is offered that we should accept instead.

God mandated through the Torah that we should obey Him and the ways He taught us through Moses. We however,

were born with a sin nature that rebels against God and authority. God's Word declares that "the soul that sins (breaks Torah) will die." In His grace, He established a system that would partially atone (pay) for the sins of people through animal sacrifice. This, of course, was not an adequate substitute to fully pay for our sins -an animal's life is not equal in value to (our) human life. Therefore, God eventually sent His own Son to live a perfect life and to die for all mankind to complete this salvation from sin. So, for any

who would receive Jesus the Messiah, putting their hope of entering God's kingdom on the fact that Christ paid for their sins rather than on trusting in their own goodness, He granted new life and entry into Heaven.

The story is not complete, though. Eternal life is received by one who believes on Christ to save them the very instant that belief is established. You live in that eternal Kingdom right now, believer! But there is a problem: you still



“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes.”

EZEKIEL 36:27

that houses your transformed heart. This flesh wars against your desire to obey, just as it sought to control you in the Old Covenant. But we are no longer left with simply the rules of proper conduct written on stone tablets outside our bodies; Through belief in Christ, God has promised to give us teachable hearts that are soft. This is the heart of this New Covenant (agreement), written not on a rule book handed to you, but those same rules, when you believe in Christ may be written on your heart that you may have a new and stronger desire to follow God's commandments than to enjoy the sinful pleasures of this world. Hold tight believer and learn now of the victory that is promised you over sin through the gift of His Holy Spirit.

Throughout the period of time that the Old Covenant was primary, God demonstrated in the Bible that people need more that just for God to tell them His ways. They, in fact, need His gift of being born again with a brand new heart and a new set of priorities to successfully walk in His ways. As men would repeatedly struggle against their natural heart, get lost and lose the battle with sin, their victory awaited God's further intervention in history.

Even prior to forgiveness and rebirth coming in Messiah Jesus, a New Covenant (way) was predicted by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah told of a time for a savior (31:27-30) followed by the giving of a new heart and the giving of His Spirit to allow a desire to grow stronger and

stronger as a believer in following God's Law (ways) (31:31-34). Ezekiel confirms this same prediction of a new heart offered to those who would turn to God in repentance, asking Him to give them an ability to follow Him faithfully (Ezekiel 11:18-20 and 36:25-27). So, not only do we as believers have the promise of forgiveness because our sins have been paid for on the cross by our savior, we also have the promise of being able to walk well in the commands of God that were previously beyond our reach before our salvation. God not only gives the victory through His Son, but secures that we may be faithful to His commandments by giving us a new heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit to make us capable to resist sin and walk in His Commandments. This gift was first given believers in Christ as recorded in the book of Acts, chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost (Shavuot) in Jerusalem. Do you know you are forgiven? Have you put your hope of acceptance by God in the work of Jesus rather than in your own goodness? Do you desire the ways of God, and do others mention how you seem to not be trapped by the sinful life to which you were once enslaved? Give thanks to God, believer, you are the fulfillment in Christ of predictions made long ago!!

PENTECOST IN THE FUTURE - ALL WILL FOLLOW THE LORD (from page 1)

As mentioned in our first section, the “First Pentecost” was none too pleasant.

The Law was given and brought to the people and 3000 lives were lost due to disobedience. The Old Covenant on tablets could not save. But the New Covenant does save! This same Law, when written on the heart, while not a means to earn salvation, is the very thing we needed to walk faithfully despite our flesh. Just as 3000 were lost to disobedience under the Old Covenant, 3000 were saved as the Holy Spirit was given to men on Pentecost in the New Covenant (Acts 2: 41). We are, as the name of the holiday indicates, the “First Fruits” of this New Covenant. We are the examples of what God can do when one looks to God for a new way. Further, by saying “First Fruits, there must be “later fruits” to expect, and indeed there are!

In the future, when Messiah returns, the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel will have their greatest fulfillment. As you read those passages for yourself again, notice that in our current time, there are still those who do not “know the Lord”. In the time when Jesus returns, everyone, even His own people will turn to Him in belief. At that time all will “know the Lord” and follow His Law as it says. What a great time it will be when that final day of Pentecostal fulfillment brings all to life and produces the fruits of the Spirit! Until then, believer, set your hope squarely on Jesus and know that you are gifted by God to desire and walk in His Ways (Ephesians 2:8-10).