

## **PENTECOST: THE DAY THE CHURCH RECEIVED HER POWER**

Text: Acts 2

### **1. The Prophecy of Pentecost**

Acts 2:1 says, *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”* Pentecost is a Greek word meaning “fiftieth day.” It marks fifty days after Passover. It is still celebrated by the Jews as Shavuot. The previous Jewish holiday, called The Feast of the Firstfruits, is celebrated on the Sunday following the celebration of Passover, which is quite significant since this feast comes on the day Jesus rose from the dead! His day celebrates the first fruits of the barley harvest. The Lord Jesus celebrated First Fruits in the appropriate manner by rising from the dead on that day. He also gave the Father His proper First Fruits offering; graves were opened and dead people rose and were seen after His resurrection in Jerusalem (Matt. 27: 52,53). *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming”* (I Cor. 15:22–23). The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost is the celebration of the first fruits of the wheat harvest. Now we celebrate the beginning of the great harvest of the church, *“...all things are ready...”* (Matthew 22:4b). *“...Look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest...”* (John 4:35b).

Pentecost was the day the Jews originally celebrated when Moses was given the Law on Mount Sinai. Pentecost now becomes the day when we commemorate the beginning movement of the church! This is reminiscent of Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones that became animated: *“Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live”* (Ezekiel 37:5). *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). Jesus died for our sins. Three days later He rose from the dead; then another forty days later He ascended to the right hand of the Father (Luke 24:50-52) and ten days after that He sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. And now the covenant of New Testament of Jesus Christ is in full force! *“For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the*

*death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth*" (Hebrews 9:16,17).

## **2. The Participation of Pentecost**

Luke goes on to tell us in the latter part of verse 1, *"...they were all with one accord in one place."* It was no mere coincidence that these words are recorded in Holy Writ. God reveals that when God's people get along it is like the sweet perfumed air when the anointed priests were together in the corporate worship in Jerusalem. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"* (Psalm 133:1). Whether it is Old Testament or New Testament, the Lord extends a blessing of His own presence in a powerful way when God's people get along.

## **3. The Posture of Pentecost**

*"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting"* (Acts 2:2). God can do anything He wants to do, anyway He wants to do it, but I always like it when He does a good thing in a sudden or immediate way. *"...And immediately his leprosy was cleansed"* (Matthew 8:3b). *"...And immediately their eyes received sight..."* (Matthew 20:34b). *"...And immediately the fever left her..."* (Mark 1:31b). *"And immediately he arose..."* (Mark 2:12a). *"...And immediately he received his sight..."* (Mark 10:52b). *"And his mouth was opened immediately..."* (Luke 1:64a). *"...And immediately her issue of blood stanchd"* (Luke 8:44c).

The main emphasis I want you to see here is the Holy Spirit came while they were in a posture of rest, *"...where they were sitting"* (Acts 2:2c). The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost is spoken of in Exodus 34:21,22: *"Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end."* God is giving us insight to how the harvest is to be gathered. In the same way this holiday of harvest is commemorated by resting, the Lord tells us in Hebrews 4:9,10, *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."* *"...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts"* (Zechariah 4:6c).

#### **4. The Power of Pentecost**

In verses 3 and 4 we learn that tongues of fire hovered over these one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room. I believe it was the same upper room where the disciples partook of the Lord's Supper. What a sight this must have been! Fire has long been a symbol of God's presence and God's power. Exodus 13:21 teaches us that God led the children of Israel with a pillar of fire by night. On Sinai, God came down: *"And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly"* (Exodus 19:18). This reminds us that in Acts 4:31, the place was shaken when the people were filled with the Holy Spirit. *"The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire"* (Deuteronomy 5:4). *"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed"* (Exodus 3:2).

In Acts 2:4, the Bible says, *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...."* Earlier John 20:22 records, *"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."* Years ago I heard it said that Jesus exhaled and on them and on the Day of Pentecost, the church inhaled.

#### **5. The Purpose of Pentecost**

For the remainder of the chapter, verses 5 through 47, we see the resulting effect of the Day of Pentecost. In Acts 2:8 every man heard the Word of God in his own tongue. Acts 2:13 shows us the disciples were under the influence of God so strongly that their behavior was modified. In Acts 2:32 the disciples were consumed with getting out the message of *"This Jesus...."* We come to the end of this great day with these final words, *"...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"* (Acts 2:47b). The result of the Day of Pentecost was people were saved. This is the supreme purpose of the empowering of the Church: that people might be saved and that the Great Commission could more effectively be carried out. The Holy Spirit purifies, sanctifies and energizes the Church. He gives gifts to the church as mentioned in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. There is a phrase found in Scripture that points out that this gifting *"...maketh increase of the body..."* (Ephesians 4:16c). When we are operating in the fullness of the Spirit there is an increase in the Body of Christ. Acts 1:8 spells out the purpose of the power of

Pentecost: *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* Oh that we might be consumed with the purpose of God in our ministry, i.e. the salvation of lost souls and their discipleship!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.