

# Why Pentecost?

*The Holy Spirit with us*

This year, Pentecost Sunday falls on June 9. On the Day of Pentecost, Christians tend to focus on it as the day when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples of Christ after the Lord's death and resurrection (Acts 2:1-11):

*"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"*

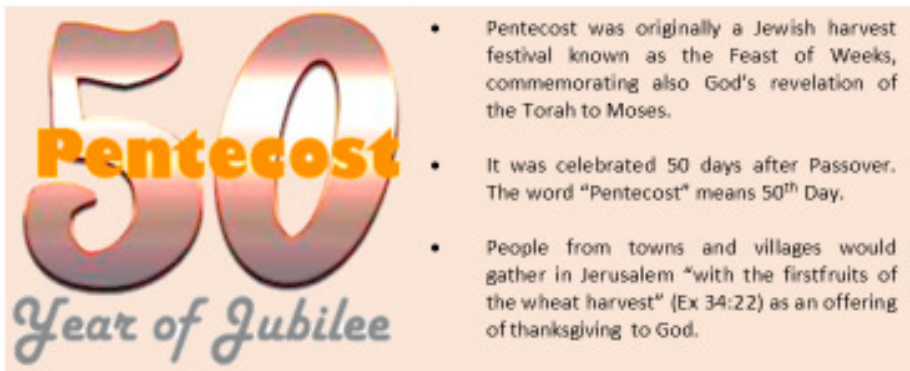
Below are two ways of looking at Pentecost:

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## (1) Pentecost in the Jewish calendar

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Firstly, apart from the miraculous happening (the disciples speaking in tongues) on that particular day referred to in Acts 2, the annual Day of Pentecost was already a special day in the Jewish calendar when the Israelites would celebrate the Festival of Weeks mentioned in Deut 16:9–12, Lev 23:15–22, Ex 34:22 and Nu 28:26–31. The name “Pentecost” derived from the number 50 (Lev 23:16) in the counting of days to the time that the Israelites would celebrate “by giving a **freewill offering** in proportion to the blessings” they had received from God. (Deut 16:10)



So, Pentecost was an important day for thanksgiving and offering even before the incident of “speaking in tongues”.

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## (2) Pentecost 50 Days After Easter

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**It happened as promised!**

Jesus promised the He would send the Holy Spirit to be with His disciples forever. (John 14:26). When the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, it was a powerful testimony of Jesus being always present with them according to His promise (Matt. 28:20). And on this day, when the disciples were gathered together, the Holy Spirit filled each of them, empowering them to speak in tongues. The tongues, being **foreign languages unknown to the speakers but**

**WHEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH COMES,  
HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL THE TRUTH**



*for he will not speak on his own authority,  
but whatever he hears he will speak,  
and he will declare to you the things that are to come*

Pentecost

- 50 days after the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ.
- The Holy Spirit enabled them to speak in other tongues; i.e., native languages of people in the crowd. (Acts 2:6, 8)
- Pentecost marks the beginning of the Christian Church and the Church's mission to the world.

**known to the listeners**, enabled the disciples to preach the gospel beyond their own language capabilities to those who were with them there and then. The miraculous aspect of the experience also had the empowering effect on the disciples, enhancing their strength of faith in Christ and their boldness to go forth thereafter to preach the gospel far and wide.

Read Acts 1.

Among the number of significant things Jesus did and taught His chosen disciples, He instructed them: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

While they were looking intently into the sky when Jesus was taken up before their eyes, two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Acts 2:1 tells us that on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were all gathered in one place. **Do you think it was by chance that they were together?** Their purpose of gathering had one expected outcome – meeting the Holy Spirit, and thereby receiving the power to be Christ’s witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were gathered together:

- with unity of heart loving Jesus;
- with oneness of spirit in worship and prayer;
- with singular anticipation for the Holy Spirit to come.

**The Holy Spirit did come upon them as Jesus had promised.** Their faith was strengthened; their life, renewed. They felt powerfully charged to go forth to be Christ’s witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” as per God’s will and the Lord’s instruction prior to His resurrection.

**It happened according to divine plan!**

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### Why do Christians celebrate Pentecost?

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Celebrating Pentecost is celebrating the birth of the Christian church, the flourishing of the body of Christ. Jesus is alive! He is with us in the Person of the Advocate; i.e., the Holy Spirit; whom the Father sent to help us and be with us forever. (John 14:16)

The Day of Pentecost is to us an important day for commemoration and reflection; for our right posture of worship, thanksgiving, offering and uplifted resolve to preach the gospel to the world.



On this Pentecost Sunday, we remind ourselves of the purpose of thanks-

giving and joy before the living God, with attention to the Church's mission to the world.

*John Lee*