

## Pentecost Sunday

### The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

#### Acts 2

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

Today is Pentecost Sunday, when we remember the sending of the Holy Spirit as described in the passage I have just read from Acts 2.

Now where does the word Pentecost come from? The NT was written in Greek and Pentecost is a Greek word that means the fiftieth day. From Pent = 5 e.g. a pentagon. The fiftieth day since what? The Jewish name for the day of Pentecost is Shavuot. It was one of three special Jewish annual celebrations. To see why they celebrate Shavuot, or Pentecost, let's go back to its origins in the Old Testament.

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They had lived there for 430 years since Joseph had become prime minister of Egypt and had brought his family to live there. In that time they had grown to be a huge nation of over 2 million people, and the Egyptians were fearful of them, so they enslaved them and set taskmasters over them. They lost their freedom and had to do as their Egyptian masters commanded. For many years they cried out to God to set them free, so God sent Moses.

Moses, who had grown up a Prince of Egyptian, but had had to flee, and was now in his eighties, was sent by God back to Egypt to command Pharaoh to set God's people free. When Pharaoh said no, God sent various plagues on the land. After nine horrible plagues, the tenth and final and most terrible of them all was the death of the firstborn. God would send the angel of death to kill all the first born males, whether human or of livestock. The Israelites were told to sacrifice a lamb and use the blood from that offering to paint the door frame of their homes.

When the Angel of death passed through the land, it passed over any house painted with lamb's blood, but in every house that was not protected by the blood of the sacrificed lamb, every first born male died. So the angel of death passed over the homes of the Israelites and so this was called the Passover, and it was remembered every year with the Passover festival, an event still celebrated to his day by the Jews.

Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go....

They were packed and ready to go, and early that next morning they were on their way. Pharaoh had lost a massive work force and wanted revenge for the death of so many

Egyptians and their livestock, so he chased after them, but when the Israelites arrived on the shore of the Red Sea, they could go no further. What would happen to them? God did still more amazing miracles, a pillar of fire to stop the Egyptians and then one of the most famous miracles, he parted (opened up a wide path through) the Red Sea so that the Israelites could cross over to the other side to continue their journey back to their home land. When they had all safely crossed, the (walls of water on either side of the roadway through the Red Sea collapsed ) sea crashed down upon them killing all the soldiers following the Israelites. The Israelites had reached the point of no return.

After six weeks or so this huge mass of people arrived at Mount Sinai. God told Moses to climb up the mountain to meet with him. There God gave him his Law, including the 10 commandments. 50 days after the first Passover, 50 days after they had escaped Egypt Moses received this very significant gift from God. The annual celebration of the giving of the Law was called Shavuot, fifty days (Pentecost) after the feast of the Passover. The Jews see this as the point at which they became a nation.

The bible is amazing!! Around 1500 years or so later there was one particular Passover, when Jesus became the Passover Lamb who was sacrificed on a Roman cross and Pentecost when God sent the Holy Spirit, as we are celebrating today. We can see a many parallels between these two events; a story of escape from slavery, a point of no return and a gift from God to help his people.

So let's look at this second story, the story of Jesus, which is even more important than the story of the Exodus because he is the only one through whom people can be restored to relationship with God.

Jesus came to earth, he lived a sinless life... yes he did cry as a baby, but he did not sin. He told people about his Father and his Kingdom that would be coming. Ultimately Jesus came so that he could die, as a criminal on a Roman cross, and as an innocent sacrifice, his blood would be spilled.

There is no historical doubt that Jesus truly was a man who walked on this earth, (this is not disputed), and was crucified on a Roman cross. Jesus was buried; he was well and truly dead. An amazing thing happened; Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. He didn't stay dead. There were accounts of him meeting with many people after his resurrection. He kept appearing to his disciples during a period of 40 days after he rose from the dead, at the end of which he gave his final commands to his followers, to go into all the world telling people about him, making them his followers and teaching them the things he had commanded them. And then he ascended into heaven, where he sits at his father's right hand. But Jesus had promised a gift, he had promised to send the Holy Spirit of God to come and live inside his followers. Exactly 10 days after his ascension the Holy Spirit was sent. 50 days after the Passover around which time he was crucified, at the

Festival of Shavuot he sent his Spirit, After 50 days, The Day of Pentecost happened, and his promise of sending the Spirit was fulfilled.

This is mind blowing ☐

Let's look at the parallels.

A lamb was sacrificed and its blood used so that God's people could be saved and escape slavery in Egypt is a picture of the blood that dripped from Jesus' back, head, hands and feet as he hung on the cross. Everyone who believes that he was 'the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' has their sins forgiven and God's judgment passes over them and they receive spiritual life that never ends and complete freedom from ever being condemned or punished by God. Jesus is the Passover lamb.... And because of his sacrifice Paul could write ["there is therefore now no condemnation to those who follow Christ Jesus."](#)

Wow

Just as the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, we are slaves to sin even though we don't know it. This is a big deal, as the bible says the punishment for sin is death.. We can only know true freedom because of Jesus' death. He was punished in our place and we get what we don't deserve, we get off..

Just as in the OT a lamb was required; we needed Jesus to do this for us.

As the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on their journey, they came to their point of no return. There comes a point in our lives where we have to declare our intentions. Jesus set an example by committing himself to fulfilling his father plan, by getting baptised. This was Jesus commitment to his death, burial and resurrection. Baptism is a vivid picture of burying a dead corpse and being raise to live a new life. And so is following Moses through the Red Sea. Scripture says they were baptised into Moses through the sea.

Today we commit ourselves to following Jesus, not by praying a prayer, but by following Jesus example, and getting baptised as a believer. Victoria, Farrukh and Jyoti have taken that step in their journey with God today. It is a vital part of our Journey. Can I ask... are you still stuck at the Red Sea? Baptism isn't some insignificant part of our journey, it isn't some kind of Religious ritual, it is part of our journey with God.

Why would we not want to do it, why would we not want to do what Jesus commands us to do, why wouldn't we want to follow his example?

These guys today have done a great thing; they have publicly declared their willingness to follow Jesus as it is set out in the Bible. They have put the past behind them just like the

Israelites had to do when they crossed the Red Sea, when they knew that had no alternative to following the Lord wherever he took them.

The Israelites travelled through the great desert and arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses went up the mountain to receive God's gift of his Law 50 days after escaping Egypt, this was God's word which was given to show the people how they should live as God's people. It defined who they were, the People of God .

In Acts, 50 days after Jesus death, another gift is given by God, to empower his people to live as God's people. The gift of his Holy Spirit was given to enable them to live as a People full of God.

2 gifts given in each situation.

OT salvation from slavery to the Egyptians and the scriptures to enable them to live as the people of God

NT salvation from slavery to sin and the Holy Spirit to empower us to live as a people full of God.

For us today,

Gift 1 is the Gift of Jesus, the Passover lamb, Jesus who gives us the gift of eternal life.

Gift 2 is the Gift of the Holy spirit, the power we need to live life as God wants us to live it.

Let's go back to our account in Acts. After the Spirit came upon them and they were all filled with his power (and spoke in languages they had never learned) quite a crowd gathered to see what was going on. They thought they were drunk by the way they were acting, but Peter stood up and said they were not drunk, as it was only nine o'clock in the morning, and he explains what had happened: about Jesus death and his resurrection and how he has ascended to the right hand of God his Father and had poured out the Holy Spirit upon them all.

Peter then says this:

38 "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Repent means change the direction you are going, and go God's way. This is faith, trusting in God, accepting what he has done for you and choosing to follow him. We have to make a decision to change. A change of heart, a new life, a new beginning.

Be Baptised – Commit yourself outwardly to what you have done inwardly. Show that your

sins have been forgiven and that you are burying your old life. We have to choose to commit ourselves to follow Jesus.

You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit – This is the gift of God's power to empower us to live a godly life. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead can live in us. We have to choose to accept this gift. And this promise is for us today if we believe in Christ.- for all whom the Lord our God will call. Have you heard him calling you?

Can you see this gift, this present.... It has been sat here all meeting.... What is in it?

Shall we just leave it unopened?

Now my boys love presents from me. After preschool Zachary will ask if I have a surprise for him. He accepts my gift of a pear very readily.

On their birthdays or Christmas they love opening their presents from their Dad and Mum. No presents are ever left unopened!!

It seems a little strange that we leave the gift of the Holy Spirit unopened, a special gift from our father in heaven.

Why wouldn't we open it?

Fear?

Weirded out in the past

Not understanding the HS – we don't receive the Holy Spirit automatically when we chose to follow Jesus!

So this story of Pentecost, from the Old Testament and the New Testament, shows that God has 2 major presents he wants to give us!

1. New Life.
2. The Power to live that life.

These sound like pretty cool presents to me.

If you have never opened the gift of life that comes from Jesus, I want to give you the opportunity today.

If you have never opened the gift of the Holy Spirit, why not take it and open it today?