

The Day of Pentecost

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Over the past century a great deal of emphasis has been placed upon the Hebrew *holy Day of Pentecost*. Many have established their doctrinal systems around their understanding of this Jewish event. Some believe it to be the “birthday of the church,”¹ while others even hold it to be the “standard” for church practice and experience.

Without ever fully examining² the meaning and placement of the *Feast of Pentecost* from the Scriptures themselves, they proceed to firmly arrange their doctrine and practice upon this event. To them the *Day of Pentecost* is the pattern of God’s will and plan for our day.

Yet have they ever considered what actually took place on that specific *Day of Pentecost*, some two millennia ago? We will briefly consider two important points concerning the *Day of Pentecost*.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS A PART OF THE LAW OF MOSES

The Day of Pentecost was a Jewish Feast Day required under the Mosaic Law.

This feast is also known as the “*feast of weeks*” (Deuteronomy 16:10) and “*feast of harvest*” (Exodus 23:16). The word *Pentecost* actually means “fiftieth”³ because it was observed *fifty days* after the *Feast of First Fruits*. This was one of the seven great annual feasts of the Lord, and the second of three feasts that required all males to be present “*before the Lord*” (Exodus 23:14-17).

Pentecost brought to a close the grain season. The cereal harvest began with barley at *Passover* and ended with wheat at *Day of Pentecost* (Exodus 34:22). (At *Passover* they waved the sheaf. At *Tabernacles* they mark the end of the fruit season.)

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1. For a further study of this subject see the author’s work *Did the Body of Christ Begin at Pentecost?*, *Bible Student’s Notebook #1*
 2. “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*” (I Thessalonians 5:21).
 3. *Strong’s Greek Lexicon #4005*; “fifty days” (Leviticus 23:16).

In the dispensation of the *Grace of God* there is no observance of holy days.

During God's current dealings with mankind there are no special days. The Jewish days (feasts included) are spoken of as "*weak and beggarly elements*" and "*bondage*" by our apostle (Galatians 4:9-11).

THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS A PART OF *PROPHECY*

The Day of Pentecost was a part of the *prophetic program* dealing with *Israel*.

The events surrounding Israel's holy *Day of Pentecost* reveal that it was a day of prophetic significance.

Peter spoke to his Jewish audience on the **Day of Pentecost** telling them of its prophetic nature:

*"But **this is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel"* (Acts 2:16).

Peter goes on to quote the prophecy of Joel:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18).

Paul, the apostle, quoting Isaiah 28:11-12 also clearly reveals to us that the tongues (languages) present on the *Day of Pentecost* were a part of Israel's prophetic program:

"In the law⁴ it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people,⁵ and yet for all that will they not hear Me, saith the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:21).

What was the purpose of the *prophesied* tongues on the *Day of Pentecost*?

The Tongues on the Day of Pentecost were for a *sign* to *Israel*.

*"Wherefore **tongues are for a sign** ..."* (I Corinthians 14:22)

Signs were a divine requirement under God's relationship *with Israel*.

*"For the Jews **require a sign**"* (I Corinthians 1:22).

4. "*the Law*" is a reference to the Hebrew Scriptures given to Israel: "*Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth ... the giving of the law*" (Romans 9:4); "*because that unto them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God*" (Romans 3:2).

5. "*this people*" throughout the Scriptures is a reference to Israel.

By God's design, Israel was His *sign nation*; signs were their *birthright* when He brought them out of Egypt.

*“And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the **first sign**, that they will believe the voice of the **latter sign**”* (Exodus 4:8).

Thus, signs belonged *TO* Israel.

*“We see not **our signs**”* (Psalm 74:9).

Thus, signs belonged *IN* Israel.

*“Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given Me are for **signs and for wonders in Israel** from the LORD of hosts”* (Isaiah 8:18).

Tongues were a sign to *unbelieving* Israel.

*“Wherefore **tongues are for a sign**, not to them that believe, but **to them that believe not**”* (I Corinthians 14:22).

Tongues were also the sign of *Israel's fall*. In I Corinthians 14:20-22 Paul explains the purpose of tongues, quoting Isaiah 28:11-13:

*“For with ... another tongue will He speak to this people ... **that** they might go, and **fall backward**, and be broken, and snared, and taken.”*

The Scripture teaches us that the *Day of Pentecost* was a part of the Jewish economy: anchored in the Law of Moses, and fulfilled according to God's prophetic plan with the nation Israel. It belonged to a Hebrew dispensation, and with the Circumcision's Twelve Apostles.

The pattern of God's will and plan for our day is the *“dispensation of the grace of God”* (Ephesians 3:2). We do not look back to Israel's law or prophecy, but to God's *current* administration of grace and the mystery revealed to us by Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision.

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