

Jerusalem (Part 1)

Important Events

- Disciples await the Spirit's arrival (Acts 1:7-8, 12-14)
 - Judas Iscariot replaced (Acts 1:15-26)
 - Pentecost (Acts 2)
 - On trial for healing a cripple (Acts 3-4)
 - Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
 - Apostles persecuted by Sanhedrin (Acts 5:12-42)
 - Dissension over care of widows (Acts 6:1-7)
 - Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 6:8-8:1)
 - Paul is avoided by the disciples after his conversion (Acts 9:26-31)
 - James killed/Peter delivered (Acts 12:1-17)
 - Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-29)
 - Paul arrested (Acts 21:17-23:11)
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Spotlight on Pentecost

The Jewish Festival

Pentecost means "fiftieth day," being the fiftieth day after Passover. It celebrated the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:9-11). It was also called Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16) or the Day of Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26).

Beginning of the Church

Jesus promised that his disciples that they would see the kingdom of God come with power and that they would receive this power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them—power to witness the risen Christ to a fallen world (Mark 9:1; John 20:22; Acts 1:4-9). On Pentecost, God pours out the Holy Spirit so the kingdom of God would come with power—not political might but spiritual strength (cf. Zechariah 4:6).

Jesus came to build his church so Hades could no longer assail his people (Matthew 16:18). In Christ, we are armed against the dark forces of this age so we can be with Christ in heaven (Ephesians 2:1-7; 6:10-17). God has set aside and dedicated every believer as a priest and partner in working his divine will (1 Peter 2:9-10; Philippians 3:10-11). Christ works through us to reconcile this world to God (2 Corinthians 5:11-21). His only plan to save humanity is through his church—it is to this cause that Christ has assembled us as he works to making the kingdoms of this world one with the Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:15).

Christ's disciples follow in the discipline or teaching of their master by carrying on the work he left and are compelled to proclaim what God has done for all of the world to know (see Acts 4:19-20). The church is Christ's body here on earth—the world will come to know him through us. How well the world will know him depends on how well we know him, how effective we communicate our faith and whether our hearers will listen.

Pouring out of the Spirit

God pours out his Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:16-21). While the Holy Spirit is often associated with miracles, his primary role is to empower God's people with spiritual might to stand against the forces of this age. For the first time in Bible history, this is not for the few but every believer (Acts 2:38-39). We house the divine and made full partners to work God's will in this world (cf. Colossians 2:9-10; 2 Peter 1:3-4)

The Holy Spirit guides us in truth (John 16:13-15), proffers forgiveness (John 20:22-23), offers powerful proof of the resurrection through miracle (Acts 2:1-4; 4:21-22, 31-33), guarantees the integrity of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21), intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:26-27), is given as a pledge of an inheritance to come

(Ephesians 1:13-14) and lives in us to council us in faith (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:15-20; Galatians 5:16-23).

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