



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 010: The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Study Author: Michael Button

Read Acts 2:1-11

v1 The Day of Pentecost. This was one of the three compulsory Jewish feasts (the other two being Unleavened Bread, which included Passover, and Tabernacles). It was held 50 days after Passover. In Judaism, the feast signified two things:

- (a) The firstfruits of the grain harvest (read Leviticus 23:16-17).
- (b) Celebration of the giving of the Law. (The association with the Law was introduced in the period between the Old and New Testaments.)

Can you see the **New** Testament significance of

- i. The timing (50 days after what? – read John 1:29 & 1 Cor 5:7)?
- ii. The firstfruits (read Acts 2:41 and Matt 9:38)?
- iii. The giving of the Law (read Ezek 11:26-27)?

(Look at the end of this study if you haven't figured these out.)

v1 The gathering. 120 of Jesus' followers, both men and women, were met together; probably in celebration of the Feast.

vv 2-3 The Spirit poured out. Was there significance in the manifestations of wind and fire? (Read John 8:38 and Luke 3:16.)

v4 Speaking in other tongues. Speaking in languages they had not learned.

vv 8-11 Visitors from many regions. Many Jews had been drawn to Jerusalem for the Feast. Each heard followers of Jesus speaking in their own language. Locate these regions on a map if you have one. Those who became Christians that day will have returned to their homeland after the Feast and started to spread the Gospel.

vv 12-40 tell of Peter's sermon (read it if you have time). This was probably no less of a miracle than the ability to speak in unlearned languages, for Peter displayed a knowledge of prophecy and interpretation of Old Testament scriptures that it is unlikely he knew before. How did he know? (Read John 16:13.)

To think about: Whitsun (Pentecost) receives little prominence in the Church today, compared to Christmas and Easter. Are we underrating its importance?

To dig deeper: Speaking in unlearned languages, effective preaching and understanding Scriptural truth are only three of the abilities given by the Holy Spirit. With the aid of a concordance, see what other activities are empowered by the Spirit.

(i) Timing: 50 days after the death of Christ, the Passover Lamb. (ii) Firstfruits: The first major 'harvest' of souls. (iii) The Law: The giving of the Spirit to obey the Law. (It is interesting to note that when the Law was first brought to the people, 3,000 died through disobedience Exod 32:8 – the same number that now received eternal life.)