



## *The Spirit of Truth* *Day of Pentecost* *Endowment Sunday*

*Acts 2:1–21 (A,B,C) & John 15:26-27;16:46-15*

*In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*

*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

**May 13, 2018**

## **Thought for the Week**

### **The Unknown Truth About Pentecost**

**Scriptures** - Leviticus 23, John 7:39, John 17:5, 24, Acts 2:33

The unknown truth regarding what actually took place on the day of Pentecost is that, on that day, in the courts of heaven above, the enthronement of Jesus Christ was completed. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was simply the *evidence* that Christ was now on the throne. It was the first “presidential” act of Christ signaling to the whole world that He was now on the throne, and that He would do everything possible to save humanity.

When Christ entered within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned, amid the songs of millions of angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon His followers in rich currents according to Christ's promise, and they were no more orphans. How quickly Christ fulfilled His promise, and sent from the heavenly courts the guarantee of His love! After His inauguration, the Spirit came and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory, which He had from all eternity with the Father. During His humiliation upon this earth, the Spirit had not descended with its entire usefulness; and Christ declared that if He went not away, it would not come, but that if He went away, He would send it. It was a representation of Himself, and after He was glorified it was manifest.

On the day of Pentecost the Spirit was given. Christ's witnesses proclaimed the power of the risen Savior. They saw Him encircled with the glory of heaven, with infinite treasures in His hands to bestow upon all who would turn from their rebellion. As the apostles set forth the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, three thousand souls were converted. They were made to see themselves as they were, sinful and polluted, and Christ as their friend and Redeemer”.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the bestowal upon the disciples of the “gift of tongues” can best be understood in the light of Christ's glorification or enthronement in heaven. Peter explained to his listeners that Jesus Christ, who 53 days before was crucified shamefully as a criminal, had been glorified in heaven. He said: “Having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the Holy Spirit, He has poured out forth this which you both see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

In other words, the outpouring of the Spirit was predicated upon the glorification of Christ. You may recall in John 7:39 that Jesus Himself explains the reasons why the Holy Spirit was not yet given while the Lord was on earth. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but thus spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. *For the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified*".

The Holy Spirit could not be poured out without Christ being first glorified. Though He was God, while he was on earth, Christ was fully a human being, restraining Himself from exercising all His prerogatives as God (Phil 2:5-8). The glorification that was to precede the outpouring of the Spirit is the glory Christ had before coming to the world. (John 17:5, 24). This glorification could only take place after His death, resurrection, and ascension.

During the time after Christ's ascension, while the disciples were waiting for the Spirit, they prayed, re-studied Scripture, and prepared their hearts. As they did these, they were led to understand that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of the feasts in *Leviticus 23* — more specifically, Passover, First Fruits, and Pentecost. And they understood that the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the culmination of the enthronement ceremony of Christ. The Man, who men put to a shameful death 53 days earlier, was now glorified in heaven, having all power and authority!

This was the good news that all people in Jerusalem had to know. This was the message that needed to be proclaimed to the many people who had gathered in Jerusalem from different nationalities.

But how could these unlearned Galilean disciples communicate this wonderful news to them? The risen and glorified Christ had the answer - the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the bestowal of the gift of tongues to enable the disciples to communicate the message clearly in foreign languages.

What then is the most important thing that happened on the day of Pentecost?

The unknown truth about Pentecost is that that day is not so much about what happened in Jerusalem, as it is about a very significant event that took place in heaven. Pentecost is not just about the Holy Spirit who came down; it is more about Jesus Christ who sent the Spirit. Pentecost is more than the speaking in tongues, the speaking of some 18 different foreign languages, the preaching of a powerful sermon, and the baptism of some 3,000 people. Rather, Pentecost is all about Jesus Christ who, sitting on His throne, bestowed upon His disciples the ability to perform these miraculous feats. The message of Pentecost is that *our Lord Jesus Christ is on the throne*, mediating in heaven as our High Priest and Intercessor.

*Happy Birthday Mary (5/26)*

## **Pentecost: A Stewardship Feast to Celebrate**

A challenge for the Christian steward is accepting, and even rejoicing in, the fact that our commitment to faith is often a counter-cultural one. Perhaps this is nowhere more striking than in the quick cultural "end" of the Easter season, and our own belief that Easter is leading us through May to the great feast of Pentecost on May 15.

We see this discordance in many Christian celebrations adapted by the popular, commercial culture. While we are still enjoying the season of Christmas and looking forward to Epiphany, most American homes have taken the Christmas tree to the recycling center and moved on to thoughts of Valentine's Day. During the sacrificial early days of Lent, there's something jarring – yes, just wrong – about all those pastel Easter eggs and bunnies appearing in stores. And all that chocolate!

So, as Christian stewards, we feel no surprise that as we break our Easter fast and begin our meditation on the Resurrection, we find that the stores have tucked those chocolate bunnies away on discount shelves, and we're off to the next commercially competitive venture. And as the great feast of Pentecost beckons us, we realize that the society around us gives this occasion hardly a passing nod. Apparently, there's no money to be made from Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit came among the apostles and imbued in them the courage to be true followers of Christ. Courage, strength, faith, the Spirit – these are hard to market in the public square, aren't they? The willingness to live and ultimately to die as martyrs for Christ, as the apostles did, these are things that are hard to package in bright paper. They don't fit well in the greeting card aisle.

Perhaps during these days of May when we as Christian stewards continue to celebrate the season of Easter and look forward to Pentecost, we might examine our own willingness to step outside the culture in our celebration of great Christian feast days. Keep the reminders of the Resurrection around you. Let your family prayer reflect the marvels of the season. Help your children & grandchildren to be aware of the liturgical calendar. But most importantly, educate yourself and your family on how powerful it is to understand and celebrate the great markers and mysteries of our shared faith experience.

