

Revealing Jesus in the Feast of Pentecost

The main activity on the Feast of Pentecost was the presentation of a wave offering to the Lord. This was two loaves of bread baked with leaven. This bread was made of fine flour that had been carefully sifted to separate the coarse matter from the wheat. The wave offering expressed the Hebrews' dependence on God for the harvest and their daily bread. It was a thanksgiving offering.

Later when the Jews were scattered among the nations, the Feast of Pentecost lost its primary significance as a harvest festival and was celebrated as a memorial to the time when God gave them the Torah at Mount Sinai.

The following account in Exodus 19:16-20 (NKJV) tell us what happened: "Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

"Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke descended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."

The English translation says all the people witnessed the thunderings and the lightnings. Jewish scholars believe that the people actually "saw the voice of God" coming out of the mountain in tongues of fire. The mixed multitude that came out of Egypt saw the tongues of fire and heard the one voice of

God speak in their different languages so they could understand His words. Since it seems strange to “see voices,” this phrase was translated as thunderings and lightnings. The voices sounded like thundering and appeared as fire.

After God gave the first of His holy words (commandments), we read in Exodus 20:18-20: “Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’ And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.’”

So God came down upon Mount Sinai to meet with His people. They gathered in one place in the morning on the sixth of Sivan. The whole mountain was filled with fire. The trumpet sounded loudly. The people ran to the foot of the mountain to meet with God. They saw voices in fire. God spoke and then Moses spoke. The people trembled. It was an awesome revelation of the glory of God. Yet, because of their sin, three thousand were to die (Exod. 32:28).

What we learn from Scripture and the ancient interpretation from Jewish scholars is that the first Pentecost did not happen in the book of Acts. It happened in the book of Exodus. If you know your Bible, you are probably already making this connection. The first Pentecost was at Mount Sinai where God wrote His words on tablets of stone. Yet, the Lord promised there would be a time in the distant future when He would write His laws on the fleshly tablets of their hearts. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

The people would come to Jerusalem each year celebrating Pentecost, hoping that God would fulfill His word to write His laws on their hearts. For 1,500 years they went home disappointed but God is faithful to keep His word. In His own

appointed time, God would come down on the people. Not on Mount Sinai in the desert but on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Hallelujah!

Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Pentecost as He was glorified and exalted to the throne of God from which He sent the Holy Spirit upon His disciples on the Day of Pentecost. This was the fulfillment (spiritually reality) of what God had promised through the prophets. God would write His laws on their hearts through the giving of the Holy Spirit. Remember this was a Feast of the Lord the Jews had been celebrating for centuries. It was not a new revelation. They had been waiting for centuries. {eoa}

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