

What Pentecost Means to Both Christians and Jews

Today, May 14, marks the 65th anniversary on the Gregorian calendar of Israel's Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. It is also the beginning of Shavuot, also called Pentecost, in which Jews around the world celebrate as if they are standing at Sinai together. As one of my Jewish friends said, this is about "not just receiving the Torah, but accepting and embracing it."

In many ways, there is no holiday we celebrate that is more evocative of the binding connection between Jews and Christians than this. At Shavuot (Pentecost), the Jews celebrate receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, which was literally the beginning of Judaism. For Christians, Pentecost, which we celebrate next Sunday, was literally the beginning of the church, when the Holy Spirit was outpoured and 3,000 were saved as Peter preached about the risen Christ.

My same Jewish friend pointed out that many of Israel's neighbors and other detractors "mourn Israel's rebirth as a catastrophe." However, "this intolerance is all the more reason to celebrate this joyous occasion," and this is why it is imperative that Christians and Jews stand together.

Thirty-four years ago today, I was in Jerusalem with Jamie Buckingham when Israel celebrated its independence. I remember it was difficult to sleep due to the Israelis celebrating all night long in the streets.

We went from Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to the Sinai Peninsula, controlled in 1979 by Israel (it is now part of Egypt). There we climbed Jebel Musa, which means the Mountain of Moses. There are actually three mountains that people think might have been the original Mount Sinai, but this is the one

accepted by most Protestants.

It was a moving experience to be able to climb that mountain and spend time at the top with my friends, contemplating what happened on that spot and how God revealed himself to Moses in a way that has affected all of mankind to this day.

While in Jerusalem, we also visited “the Upper Room,” where the book of Acts says the Holy Spirit was outpoured. Our group of nine American pilgrims had a wonderful time of worship. I remember being overwhelmed with emotion as I prayed that day in my prayer language. It was from that experience on the Day of Pentecost that those of us who believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit call ourselves Pentecostals.

✖ I am encouraging those who call themselves Pentecostals to celebrate Pentecost Sunday next week. Billy Wilson’s ministry, called Empowered21, is taking the lead and providing materials for your church. We are also posting information about the Holy Spirit online.

As you may know, we devoted our May issue of *Charisma* to the work of the Holy Spirit. We have gotten a wonderful response, and now the printed issues are gone. So we are making that digital issue available free of charge during the month of May. You can get it by clicking [here](#). It’s a wonderful way to experience the beauty of the digital issue. You can also share it with friends on social media.

Please leave your thoughts about Jewish independence, about the Jewish festival Shavuot (pronounced *Shuhvote*) and Pentecost Sunday. And let me know how you like our digital issue.

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