

RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...”
—ACTS 2:3-4

We will never understand Christianity if we think of it simply in terms of believing facts about Jesus. Unless we move beyond that to experiencing the presence of God within us by His Holy Spirit, our Christian lives will become dull and stagnant.

Until the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had been with people, sometimes for a particular task, and then withdrew, but now by acknowledging our sin, and inviting Christ into our lives, the Holy Spirit is in people. That’s called ‘regeneration’, and is new life taking place within us, sealing us forever as children of God. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”

The Day of Pentecost took place during the ‘Feast of Weeks’, also known as the ‘Day of First Fruits’. The setting was one of great joy and celebration, where Jews from all over the known world came to Jerusalem. Centuries before, God said to Ezekiel, “I will pour out my Spirit on you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” (Ezekiel 36:27). It wasn’t a fluke or coincidence that on this day with a huge gathering of people in Jerusalem ‘from every nation under heaven’, the Holy Spirit was poured out. It was planned by God and marked the fulfillment of the Law in Christ.

It is significant that what seemed to be tongues of fire had separated and came to rest on each person individually. Previously, God's presence rested on the nation of Israel corporately. If you were born into a Jewish family, you were automatically a part of the covenant God established with Abraham and his descendants. But on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to rest singly on each person, which is symbolic of every person entering individually into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the Day of Pentecost, the disciples ceased to be 'followers' of Jesus, but were now in union with Him. Following Jesus means He's up there somewhere, and we're trying our best to keep up with Him, but something much more wonderful and liberating happened that day. Christ gave us Himself. People received the Holy Spirit, were baptized by the Holy Spirit, and were filled with the Holy Spirit. For the first time, Christians came into being. The defining issue is receiving the Holy Spirit to indwell our lives. It is the infusion of new life, the life of the Spirit of God into our experience.

PRAYER: Dear Father, thank You for the incredible gift of your Holy Spirit. His work in me has brought me new life, and I pray I will come to know and experience You more.

TO REFLECT UPON: How has receiving the Holy Spirit most impacted my life?