

# BEFORE PENTECOST

*“So when they met together, they asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’” —ACTS 1:6*

The Day of Pentecost took place 50 days after the resurrection of Christ. Jews from all over the known world were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate what was also known as ‘Feast of Weeks’ or ‘Feast of Harvest’. We are told in Ephesians that God had in mind His plan for redemption before the foundation of the world. It was on this day He chose to pour out His Holy Spirit from heaven, and about 3,000 people were converted to Christ, and indwelt by His Spirit.

Before Pentecost, Jesus’ disciples had an entirely different picture. They believed the time had come when the Messiah would give them back their independence and dignity; that He would re-establish their throne and set up their rightful kingdom as the chosen people of God. Politically and practically, this assumption was totally within the realm of Jewish understanding. For 600 years, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had been demolished by invading powers. The people continually lived under foreign rule; first Babylon, then Persia, Greece, and in Jesus’ day, Roman rule. So the disciples asked the question, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel?”

Spiritually, they had it wrong. They had narrowed God’s purpose down to the nation of Israel and made the Jewish people an end in themselves. But Jesus switches their focus from Israel as a nation to the Holy Spirit and His much greater agenda of reaching and blessing the entire world. He replied to their question, “It is not for you to know the times or date

the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you...” (Acts 1:7-8).

Jesus wasn't changing the subject. He was still speaking of a kingdom; one that was yet to come and would reign forever, but God was also about to set up a temporary kingdom on earth by His Holy Spirit. When the Pharisees asked Jesus about the kingdom of God, He answered, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say ‘here it is’ or ‘there it is’, because the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20-21).

On the Day of Pentecost, God poured out His Holy Spirit, not only for the purpose of redemption and salvation, but so that the life of His Son might indwell the people. There are no boundaries to the sphere of Christ's reign, because it is in our hearts He exercises His kingship. And His territory is marked throughout generations and millenniums of people from every nation, creed and tongue who have given Him the throne of their lives.

***PRAYER: Dear Precious Lord, thank you for indwelling my heart and giving me your Spirit to reign in my life. You're all I need, and I pray for others to experience the same.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I allowing the Spirit of Christ to reign in my life?***