

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” —ACTS 2:41

The Day of Pentecost was one of three main festivals in the Jewish calendar where people came to Jerusalem from all over the known world to celebrate. In the Old Testament, it was called ‘the Feast of Weeks’ or ‘the Day of First Fruits’. It was a Jewish thanksgiving, and during the inter-testamental period, it also became a celebration of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. This made for a significant setting for the day the Holy Spirit was to be poured out. Thousands came from all over.

The Holy Spirit descended and was poured out over the house where the disciples were staying. “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 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 and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:1-4). When the people heard this sound, a crowd gathered and was utterly amazed and bewildered because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Then Peter stood up with the eleven other apostles, raised his voice and addressed the crowd. He explained who Jesus was, His resurrection and what was presently taking place. “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the

right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear” (Acts 2:12-14). The people were cut to the heart, and compelled to respond, they asked, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

The Lord added three thousand converts that day, and everyday kept adding to their number. The Day of Pentecost is as crucial an event in the Gospel as is the birth of Jesus, His crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and return to earth. It is the Holy Spirit having been poured out from heaven into people that fulfills the purpose of Jesus Christ. The life of God, lost in the Garden of Eden, was now being restored to humanity. Pentecost was the day the Church of Jesus Christ was born. If we’re indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we are counted among those whom the Lord added to their number.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, It is a precious and priceless gift to be indwelt by your Spirit. Nothing in all the world compares with the power and peace that comes with You. Thank You for having died and risen to life to make that possible.

TO REFLECT UPON: How would I describe being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and what that means to me?