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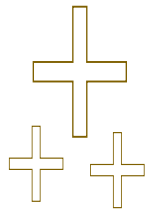
Welcome to St. Paul AME Church Winter Garden, Florida

Where we are changing lives and perspectives through
the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ!

Sunday, May 4, 2025

The Reverend Rebecca Thompson, Pastor

Continued Study of Pentecost – A Father's Love



Introduction to Pentecost in both the Old and New Testaments – And A Father’s Love From the Very Beginning of Time

Pentecost is called the birth of the Church because it marks the moment when God's people were no longer merely followers of Jesus—they became **Spirit-empowered witnesses**, transformed into a unified body with a divine purpose. On that historic day, recorded in Acts 2, the **Holy Spirit descended** upon the disciples gathered in Jerusalem, not only fulfilling Jesus’ promise but also inaugurating a new way in which God interacted with His people.

This event was not random; it occurred during the Jewish **Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)**, a festival that celebrated the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Just as Israel became a covenant people at Sinai through the written Law, the Church became a covenant community at Pentecost through the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit**. This shift signified that God was now writing His law **on human hearts**, just as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:33.

“I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” – Jeremiah 31:33

At Pentecost, the disciples, once uncertain and hesitant about their future without Jesus, their Rabbi and guide, were transformed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What had been a season of fear and waiting suddenly turned into a moment of divine empowerment. In that upper room, ordinary men and women were filled with supernatural boldness, speaking in other tongues and declaring the wonders of God to people from every nation.

This marked the birth of the Church, not as a quiet gathering of believers, but as a Spirit-filled movement commissioned to spread the gospel with power, unity, and courage. The same Peter who had once denied Jesus now stood and preached with authority, and thousands were added to the faith.

Pentecost wasn’t just a moment it was a divine turning point that ignited a global evangelism. Through the Holy Spirit, Peter’s message pierced hearts, and **three thousand people** were baptized that very day, becoming the first members of what we now call **the Church** (Acts 2:41).

But this was more than a revival; it was the opposite of the scattering of Babel, where languages once divided humanity (Genesis 11). Now, at Pentecost, the Spirit enabled the apostles to speak in many tongues, **declaring the wonders of God to every nation under heaven** (Acts 2:5–11).

It **released the mission of the Church**, sending ordinary men and women, like you and me, to the ends of the earth with the extraordinary power of God. No longer confined to ethnic Israel, the message of salvation became **universal**, extending to **“every tribe, language, people, and nation”** (Revelation 5:9).

The Church was born, activated by the Spirit, and committed to Christ’s commission:
“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” –

Acts 1:8

In this way, Pentecost is not simply an event on the calendar it is the **spiritual genesis** of the Church:

- Unified by the Spirit of God,
- Empowered and equipped for the mission,
- Commissioned to spread the gospel, and
- Marked by God's indwelling presence, freely received.

Like A Loving Father:

- Like a loving father, God made a **sacrificial provision** to protect His children and bring them to freedom.
- Like a loving father, God **teaches, equips, and empowers** his children to walk uprightly and succeed.
- Like a loving father God provides not only protection and provision but presence—staying near, journeying with his children.

We Are Children of God

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.”
Romans 8:14 (NRSVUE)

This is sonship: not by birthright, but by the Spirit.
We are no longer slaves to fear—we are heirs of the Kingdom.

The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed...The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

Old Testament (Law)

Also Called: The Mosaic Covenant or Sinai Covenant

Main Scripture: Exodus 19–24; Deuteronomy

Mediator: Moses

Participants: God and the Nation of Israel

Basis: Law (Torah) – Obedience brings blessing; disobedience brings judgment

Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision and Sabbath observance

Sacrifices: Animal sacrifices for atonement of sin (Leviticus)

Place of Worship: Tabernacle/Temple

Priesthood: Levitical priests

Purpose:

Reveal God's holiness and man's sin

Establish Israel as God's chosen people

Point forward to the need for a greater Savior

Key Verse:

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people..." – *Exodus 19:5*

New Testament (Crucifixion & Resurrection)

Main Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8–10

Mediator: Jesus Christ

Participants: God and all who believe in Christ (Jews and Gentiles)

Basis: Grace through faith – Righteousness is imputed, not earned

Sign of the Covenant: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion)

Sacrifice: Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice on the cross

Place of Worship: The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

Priesthood: All believers are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)

Purpose:

Fulfill the Law and Prophets (Matthew 5:17)

Offer salvation and forgiveness to all

Write God's law on hearts, not tablets

Key Verse:

"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." – *Luke 22:20*

Pilgrimage Festivals in the Bible - are **three major Jewish pilgrimage festivals** commanded by God in the Torah. During these feasts, all Israelite males were required to **journey to the Temple in Jerusalem** to offer sacrifices and worship. Deut 16:16 - "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose: at the festival of **unleavened bread**, at the festival of **weeks**, and at the festival of **booths**. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed."

The **Pilgrimage Festivals** beautifully reflect a **Father's love**—both in the context of **God the Father's covenant with Israel** and **His eternal love shown through Christ**. Each festival reveals not only **divine provision and protection**, but also the **relational, restorative, and redemptive love** of a Father who invites His children to draw near.

We begin with a review of the Old Testament and of the the New Testament. Followed by a review of the:

- **Passover (Pesach)**
- **Feast of Weeks** (Shavuot / Pentecost)
- **Feast of Tabernacles** (Sukkot)

The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed...The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

Festivals	Father's Expression	Spiritual Fulfillment
Passover (Pesach)	Delivers from danger with sacrificial love	Christ as the Lamb, delivering us from sin
Feast of Weeks (Shavuot / Pentecost)	Equips His children with truth and power	Gift of the Holy Spirit; law written on hearts
Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Provides and stays near in every season	God's presence with His people now and eternally in Christ

These festivals are not just rituals—they're **invitations from God the Father**. He calls His children to **remember, rejoice, and return** to Him. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, every step of the journey, the Father's love is present: **leading, lifting, loving, protecting, providing, and guiding His people home.**

Passover (Pesach) -

Begins: 14th of Nisan

Event: Commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 12).

Spiritual Theme: Redemption and freedom from bondage.

Firstfruits (Reshit Katzir) - Occurs:

On the day after the Sabbath during Passover week (Leviticus 23:10-11).

Event: Offering of the first sheaf of the barley harvest to God.

Spiritual Theme: Thanksgiving for God's provision.

Counting the Omer (Sefirat HaOmer) - Duration: 49 days (7 weeks), starting from the day of Firstfruits.

Commanded In: Lev. 23:15-16.

Purpose: A time of reflection, anticipation, and spiritual preparation.

Pentecost (Shavuot/Feast of Weeks) -

Occurs: On the 50th day after Firstfruits.

Event: Celebrates the giving of the Law (Torah) at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1-6).

Spiritual Theme: Covenant, revelation, and responsibility.

Old Testament

Jesus' Death At Passover -

Fulfillment: Jesus is the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Event: His crucifixion occurred during Passover week (Matthew 26-27).

Spiritual Meaning: Redemption from sin through the blood of the Lamb.

The 40 Days After Resurrection – Event:

Jesus appears to His disciples over 40 days (Acts 1:3).

Activity: Teaching them about the kingdom and preparing them for what is to come.

Pentecost is on the 50th day after the Passover. The Holy Spirit descends on the disciples. Birth of the Church, empowerment for mission, and fulfillment of God's promise in Joel 2:28

New Testament

Jesus' Resurrection as Firstfruits

- Occurs: On the day of Firstfruits

Fulfillment: Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Meaning: Promise of new life and future resurrection for believers.

10 Days of Waiting

(Acts 1:4-14) – After

Jesus' ascension, the disciples wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit.

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Festival	Old Testament		New Testament	
Passover (Pesach)	God delivered Israel from Egypt through the blood of the lamb	Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:5	Jesus, the Lamb of God, sacrificed for our deliverance from sin and death	Luke 22:7–20; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7
Feast of Weeks (Shavuot / Pentecost)	Celebrated the giving of the Law at Sinai and the wheat harvest	Leviticus 23:15–21; Jeremiah 31:33; Joel 2:28–29	The Holy Spirit is poured out, writing the Law on our hearts; the Church is born	Acts 2:1–4
Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Remembered God's provision in the wilderness; living in temporary shelters (sukkot)	Leviticus 23:33–43; Zechariah 14:16	Christ dwelt (tabernacled) among us; one day God will dwell with His people forever	John 1:14; Revelation 21:3

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Old Testament		Festivals	New Testament	
God delivered Israel from Egypt through the blood of the lamb	OT Significance: Commemorates the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt.	Passover (Pesach) Pilgrimage Purpose: Families brought a lamb for sacrifice and participated in the Passover meal in Jerusalem.	Jesus, the Lamb of God, sacrificed for our deliverance from sin and death	NT Fulfillment: Jesus is the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7); His crucifixion occurred during Passover.
Celebrated the giving of the Law at Sinai and the wheat harvest	OT Significance: Remembers God's provision during Israel's 40-year wilderness journey.	Feast of Weeks (Shavuot / Pentecost) Spiritual Significance: Also commemorates the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai .	The Holy Spirit is poured out, writing the Law on our hearts; the Church is born	NT Fulfillment: On this day, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples (Acts 2), launching the Church.
Remembered God's provision in the wilderness; living in temporary shelters (sukkot)	OT Significance: Remembers God's provision during Israel's 40-year wilderness journey.	Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) Pilgrimage Purpose: Israelites lived in tents (sukkot) and worshipped at the Temple with joy and offerings.	Christ dwelt (tabernacled) among us for 33 1/3 years; one day God will dwell with His people forever	NT Fulfillment: Jesus "tabernacled" among us (John 1:14); Revelation 21:3 promises God will dwell with His people forever.

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Festivals	Spiritual Principle	
<p>Passover (Pesach) Pilgrimage Purpose: Families brought a lamb for sacrifice and participated in the Passover meal in Jerusalem.</p>	<p>Redemption through the blood of Christ</p>	<p>Biblical Theme: God shielded His children from death and delivered them from bondage (Exodus 12). Fatherly Parallel: Like a loving father, God made a sacrificial provision to protect His children and bring them to freedom. Fulfillment in Christ: <i>“God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).</i></p>
<p>Feast of Weeks (Shavuot / Pentecost) Spiritual Significance: Also commemorates the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.</p>	<p>Empowerment by the Holy Spirit</p>	<p>Biblical Theme: God gave the Torah, His instructions, as a guide for life. In the NT, He gives the Holy Spirit, writing the law on our hearts. Fatherly Parallel: A loving father teaches, equips, and empowers his children to walk uprightly and succeed. Fulfillment in Christ: <i>The Father sent the Spirit to dwell in His children, guiding them into all truth (John 16:13).</i></p>
<p>Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) Pilgrimage Purpose: Israelites lived in tents (sukkot) and worshipped at the Temple with joy and offerings.</p>	<p>God’s presence with His people now and forever</p>	<p>Biblical Theme: God dwelt among His people in the wilderness, covering them with His presence, providing food, water, and shelter. Fatherly Parallel: A loving father provides not only protection and provision but presence—staying near, journeying with his children. Fulfillment in Christ: <i>Jesus “tabernacled” among us (John 1:14), and the Father promises to one day dwell with us forever (Revelation 21:3).</i></p>