

Pentecost: An Endowment of the Holy Spirit

An Engagement Gift from the Bridegroom to His Bride
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The Bible holy day we call *Pentecost* is the central Holy Day of *seven* annual Biblical Holy Days. There are three in the spring, three in the fall, with Pentecost residing in the middle. Pentecost occurs at the start of the summer harvest of wheat, typically in May or June. It is held *seven* weeks (of *seven* days each, or 49 days) after another Holy Day, *the Feast of Firstfruits*, the day Christ was resurrected. In today's Christian world (dominated by the Gregorian calendar and Catholicism), *Pentecost* occurs on the Sunday *nearest* the 50 days from Easter Sunday, or Sunday June 4th in 2017. God's law required that the Israelites participate in three annual pilgrimages to appear before the Lord at Jerusalem (Exodus 23:14–17). They included three of the seven Biblical holy days; *Passover*, *Pentecost*, and *Tabernacles*. They occur at the spring barley harvest, the summer wheat harvest, and fall fruit harvest, respectively (Ex. 23:14). The Lord's people (the Bride) would remember Him and His love for them as the Bridegroom on these special gathering.

Most people remember Pentecost as the time in the New Testament where the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Lord's disciples like rain, in Acts chapter 2. It occurred 50 days after the Lord's resurrection, and some 10 days after He ascended into heaven. The Lord desired that His disciples be *endowed* with the Holy Ghost in His absence, that they might teach others with the convincing power of the Spirit. It was at Pentecost in an upper room where "*cloven tongues of fire*" were seen above the heads of the Lord's disciples, a sign that they had been endowed with this gift and power. Other signs followed these believers as well, including the sound of the Spirit in *a rushing mighty wind*. With it many *spoke in tongues*, a form of special worship (see Gifts of the Spirit, www.7witnesses.com). It was a life-changing event for these early Christians, empowering them with the Spirit prior to their missionary labors.



Left, the dramatic Sinai experience; Right, the upper room gathering of Christ's Disciples in Jerusalem

"And when the day of *Pentecost* was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a *rushing mighty wind*, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them *cloven tongues like as of fire*, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and began to *speak with other tongues*, as *the Spirit* gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

The First Pentecost-like Event at Sinai

A similar event was attempted centuries earlier at Mt. Sinai. It was part of the institution of the Old Testament covenant, one featuring the blood of animal sacrifices. They symbolized and foreshadowed the shedding of Christ's blood, which would later usher in a new covenant found in the New Testament – a covenant of grace. In it, the Lord became our New and Everlasting Covenant.

Jehovah first had to provide *deliverance* for His Bride Israel, held captive in slavery and oppression in Egypt. It was at the first *Passover* where lamb's blood was spread onto the doorways of Israelite homes in a rudimentary *Tau* or *cross* mark. It symbolized a *sealing* to God, and served as protection against the destroying angel that came later at 12 midnight, destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians and their animals. This led the freedom for the Israelites. Passover was a type for

Christ's future Atonement. He paid the price for His Bride as the Lamb of God, His blood becoming payment for Israel's *spiritual deliverance*. The next day the Bride Israel left Egypt quickly, having no time to let their bread rise. This day of freedom would later be known as *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, another Biblical holy day, the day they left Egypt, without time to let their bread rise. They then journeyed for 47 days, arriving at Mount Sinai, where they camped at its base. God then invited all Israel to meet Him there, and enter into a covenant with Him, a symbol of marriage. Moses was instructed to have the Bride prepare herself for 3 days of cleansing, before the appointed meeting time (Ex. 19:11-16). It would be then that Israel would enter into a *covenant* relationship with their God, the Bridegroom. We read in Exodus 19:

"Thus shalt thou [Moses] say to the house of Jacob... Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 19:4-6).

The Israelites then agreed to the terms of the covenant, saying:

"And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD" (Ex. 19:8).

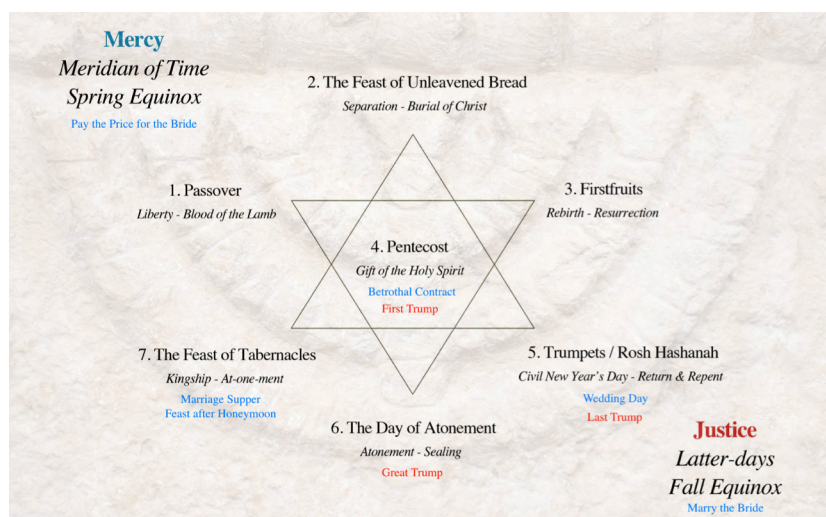
Verses 18 and 19 of Exodus 20 reveal the fear the Israelites had of God and His great glory seen upon Sinai, the mountain covered by thick, dark clouds with lightning. Because of fear, unbelief, and false traditions, the Israelites rejected the Lord's offer to meet Him and be His Bride. Israel chose instead the man Moses to lead them rather than God. This led to a cursing, resulting in the lesser law and lesser priesthood.

"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but *let not God speak with us*, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, **Fear not: for God is come to prove you**, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (Ex. 20:18-20).

D&C 84 and JST Exodus 34 add clarity to the invitation the Lord extended to Israel as His prospective Bride. The Israelites were invited to enter God's *rest* at Sinai - "*the fulness of His glory*" (see D&C 84:24). Israel rejected God's offer and instead desired Moses to take their place on fiery Sinai (see JST Ex. 34:1-2; D&C 84:19-26; Heb. 3 & 4). In God's mercy, a covenant was still made with the Israelites, but a lesser one. Instead of marriage, there would be a trial period for Israel, an extended engagement covenant. In it they received the lesser law and the lesser priesthood (see JST Ex. 34:1-2 & D&C 84:21-27). They could have enjoyed *the fulness* of God's presence, along with His higher law, and the greater Melchizedek priesthood, all leading to greater potential blessings. Their rejection of God was further compounded in the creation of the golden calf worshipped at the base of Sinai while waiting for Moses to return. Idolatry was occurring just after they had made their lesser covenant with God. The prospective Bride was too steeped in the ways of Egypt and slavery. Israel was thus not allowed to enter the Bridegroom's "*rest*" during her 40 years in the wilderness.

Men or God Modern scripture reveals that many today are making the same mistake. We reject the Bridegroom's invitation to symbolically marry Him – or come to know Him, and thus we settle for less, as many are entrenched in the ways of the world. Our rejection of the opportunity to enter the fulness of God's "*rest*" is addressed in 3 Nephi 16:10, where it is said that the Gentiles will reject "*the fulness*" (see also D&C 113:8; 124:28). Many also replace the living Christ with a modern-day "Moses" in leaders, churches, and the deadness of the law (see D&C 76:98-106). In this many forsake, deny, and reject Christ, favoring religion over relationship with the Bridegroom.

In the marriage symbolism of scripture, the fiery purging present when we are "*born again*" in Christ is where we receive the Lord's engagement gift. It is the gift or *endowment* of the Holy Ghost; the more permanent companionship of the Spirit as our guide. It is given to us *by* God as the Bridegroom (see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28; 15:26; D&C 33:15). The *endowment* of the Holy Ghost, the first comforter, precedes the greater gift of His personal presence, the Second Comforter. To have the mentoring of God in this life is the greatest blessing available here. This is what He offered the Israelites. They were unprepared to receive Him and His best gifts. Our Lord repeatedly invites us to receive Him and His best gifts throughout scripture. He does so in a simple five-word invitation, "**repent and come unto me**" (see D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; D&C 93:1; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2).



Pentecost Patterns The pouring out of the Holy Spirit is associated with four primary signs following believers in five historical settings. The patterns include (1) *fire* or a *pillar of fire*, (2) the sound of *mighty rushing wind*, (3) *speaking in tongues*, and (4) *great joy* experienced by many when the Spirit was poured out. All of these are typically associated with the *Holy Spirit* in scripture. At Sinai there was also *thick, dark clouds, lightning*, and *trumpeting*. Thick clouds served as a type of *veil* to shield the Israelites from the Lord's powerful *glory*. The five settings where these patterns were evident include: (1) Sinai, *Exodus 19-20*, (2) Jerusalem, *Acts 2*, (3) the land of Zarahemla in the Book of Mormon,

Mosiah 5, (4) the land of Nephi, *Helaman 5*, and (5) at Kirtland, Ohio as recorded in church historical records.¹

"Pentecost" (Greek for "50") is one of five names for this annual holy day celebrating the outpouring of God's Spirit in the New Testament (Acts 2). The other four names for it include "Shavuot" - Hebrew for "weeks" (or "sevens"), "the Feast of Weeks", "the Feast of Sevens", and "the day of Maton" (meaning "gift"). This holy day is associated with the numbers 7 and 50. It occurs 7 weeks of 7 days (plus 1) or 50 days from the time the Israelites left slavery in Egypt, to the time a special covenant was made between God and the Bride Israel at the temple-mountain of Sinai. In Christ's day it was the 50 days between the Lord's resurrection, occurring on the holy day *Firstfruits* (the third of the three spring holy days), and *Shavuot* (now called *Pentecost* by Christians). It should be noted that the number 50 is also tied to the *Jubilee Year* of restoration, celebrated on the 50th year in the Bible calendar, following 7 Sabbatical Year cycles of 7 years each (or 49 years).

Jews converted to Christianity changed the name of *Shavout* to *Pentecost* after Jesus' ascension. The new name reflects a new covenant and its attending endowment of the Spirit. The early Christians desired to be led by the the Holy Ghost, rather than following the "deadness of the law" alone. Nephi spoke of the deadness of the law in contrast to being alive in Christ and His Spirit in 2 Nephi 25:26-27. The Lord promises us a portion of His Spirit in both of the Sacrament prayers, if we are worthy. We receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost on a more permanent basis when we are finally cleansed in the *baptism of fire* experience. God then provides us with the Holy Ghost, "an *endowment of power from on high*" (see Luke 24:49). He said, "I will baptize you with fire..." (3 Ne. 12:1, see also 2 Ne. 31 & 32; Alma 36:18-26; Mos. 5:2-15 & Hel. 5:42-49). This endowment may be compared to an engagement gift, given out of love from the Bridegroom to His prospective Bride.

In Hebrew tradition, engagement gifts are often jewelry, used to *beautify* the Bride and reveal the groom's *love* for her. It is also an act of *encouragement* during the waiting period prior to marriage, hinting at what is to come later in marriage. Jacob worked for Laban *seven* years prior to his marriage to Leah, and then another *seven* years for Rachel. This revealed his great love for her. In connection with this love, it should be noted that the Hebrew word for "swear" (or "make an oath") and the word for "seven" are the same. Thus, *Shavuot* is "the Feast of Sevens" - the "the Feast of *seven weeks*" or "the Feast of the Pledge or Oaths of God." *Shavuot* or *Pentecost* is the Holy Day tied to the Brides *engagement* to the Bridegroom in connection with "the *oath of sevens*," the promise of a greater gift at marriage, that of the Bridegroom Himself.

The Fiery Baptism The engagement gift of the Holy Ghost is tied to the covenant relationship the future Bride has with God. It comes after the baptism of fire experience. Before Esther was married to the King of Babylon, she underwent a long period of cleansing and preparation. This is similar to what we must undergo to receive Christ as the Bridegroom. We must repent and submit ourselves fully to God via a broken heart and contrite spirit. It is the sacrifice God requires of to receive the endowment known as "the *baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost*." Note the five parts of this special *covenant* relationship, one comparable to marriage.

1. It is our engagement as the Bride (believers in His gospel) to the Bridegroom – Christ the Lord our Savior
2. In it the Bridegroom presents an engagement gift or *endowment* (of *power*) to the future Bride - the Holy Ghost
3. This engagement day has ties to the symbolic numbers 7 and 50 in connection with a *covenant, vow, oath, pledge*,

charge, or swearing (the number 50 is 7 x 7, or 49 days + 1 more day, the extra day signaling a new beginning, like the 8th day frequently mentioned in scripture, the first day of the next week of 7 days).

4. The engagement day occurs at the time of the **summer harvest of wheat**, a time of greater **light**. It is the middle one of three Holy Days all Israel was to observe at their capital city Jerusalem.
5. The engagement covenant looked toward fulfillment in a greater gift coming in marriage, when the Bride finally receives Christ as the Bridegroom and the fulness of His glory and love (see D&C 84:24).

The Marriage The *vow, pledge or swearing* in the engagement at *Pentecost* looks toward a final “*sealing*” in the marriage ceremony (1 Cor. 1:21; Mos. 5:15). There, both parties make a *covenant* to be *faithful* to each other and *love* one another with *the whole heart* in the Hebrew marriage ceremony. *Seven* signers were required on the marriage contract or Ketubah. Brides in the marriage ceremony also circled their husbands *seven* times as part of their marriage “*oath*.” She thus “*swore*” to the terms of the covenant “*seven*” times – the symbolic number of “*completion*,” the most common number in scripture. Marriage symbolism throughout scripture is symbolic of the *relationship* we are to have with the Lord Jesus. We are to be “*alive in Christ*.” Contrast this with *religious* observances and the deadness of the law. The engagement gift of the Holy Ghost (the first comforter) is a powerful tool in leading us to a greater gift, God in marriage-like relationship (see 2 Ne. 32:5). He as the Bridegroom is *the Heavenly Gift* (4th Ne. 1:3; Ether 12:8; Heb. 6:44), the Second Comforter.

Oil in Our Lamps We learn in 2 Nephi 32:3 and 5 that it is the Holy Ghost that teaches us all necessary things to receive this second, greater endowment. Five of the virgin Brides in JST Matthew 25:10-11 were *wise* and had this *oil in their lamps*, five were “*unwise*” and did not. They were thus shut out of the Lord’s glorious presence. The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible provides key insights necessary to fully understand the reason. The regular King James Version of Matthew 25:12 says that the unwise *virgins* (righteous ones) were not let into the bridal chamber because God as the Bridegroom did not know them. Joseph Smith’s re-translation reverses this, stating that **they did not come to know Him!**

“*Verily I say unto you, Ye know me not*” (JST Matthew 25:11).

Joseph’s inspired re-translation of the Bible clearly reveals that it is our responsibility to come to “**know**” the Lord *in an intimate way*, or we will not “*enter in*” with Him personally at the last day (see also JST Matt. 7:33; JST Matt. 21:26-56; D&C 101:41-61; Isa. 22:15-25). Sadly, the wisdom of a knowing *relationship* with Christ is not part of the regular Bible used by most Latter-day Saints, nor even the limited JST verses in our current Bibles. It is also not found on the LDS Church website. Nevertheless, Elder David Bednar quoted this verse, along with JST Matthew 7:33. It was a reminder that virgins among us must “*awake and arise*” and go out to meet the Bridegroom. We read in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Yea, let the cry go forth among all people: **Awake and arise** and *go forth to meet the Bridegroom*; behold and lo, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour” (D&C 133:10-11).

End Notes

¹ *Pentecost Events & Patterns* There are five examples of the Lord setting aside a specific place *and* time for His chosen people – as a group - to receive *the fiery baptism of the Spirit* as a preparatory engagement *gift* - an *endowment* of **power from on high** (from Him). They were places prepared to receive **Him** and His gifts! They include; (1) With Moses and Israelites at *Sinai* (Ex. 24:13 & chapters 19-20); (2) With the early disciples of Christ at *Jerusalem* (Luke 24:49 & Acts 1 & 2); (3) With King Benjamin and his people in the land of *Zarahemla* (Mosiah 1-5); (4) With Lehi and Nephi in a prison in *the land of Nephi* (Helaman 5); And (5) With Joseph Smith and the early Saints at *the Kirtland Ohio Temple* dedication, March 27th, 1836 (historical records and D&C 95:8-9). Three primary Pentecost patterns occurred at each of them. They include; (1) A *covenant* made between the people and God; (2) *Fire* was present, representing God’s Spirit; And (3) The sound of a *mighty rushing wind* (also tied to the Holy Spirit). Additional patterns have been reported, including seeing *thick dark clouds, speaking in tongues*, experiencing great joy, and ties to the number 3000 or 300 (below). For more on this subject, see the author’s shorter Pentecost-related paper, *An Endowment of Power from On High*.

One *unusual* Pentecost pattern tying the events of Sinai with those at Jerusalem is the number 3000; There were 3000 killed because of the idolatry at Sinai, versus the 3000 *born again* in the fiery baptism of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In the Book of Mormon there were 300 Lamanites born again in Helaman 5:49. The number 3 is closely tied to Christ and His divinity (numerous examples). In scripture, the number 3000 appears to be tied to things of a “sacred” versus profane character (whether it be people or space). The Levites carried the Ark some 3000 feet (or 2000 cubits) away from the rest of the Israelites when it was carried from place to place (see Joshua 3:4). This was also the distance from the Holy of Holies in Herod’s Temple to the sin offering altar on Olivet - the place of our Lord’s atonement (see *The Original Location of the Temple and the Atonement*, www.7twitnesses.com).