



CONTINUALLY DEVOTED: LEARNING

By Rev. Will Nelken

Presented at Trinity Community Church, San Rafael, CA, on Sunday, February 5, 2023

The Day of Pentecost was an annual feast among the Jewish people, originally memorializing the giving of God’s Law to Moses at Mount Sinai, and also the barley harvest of early summer. That seems like a particularly appropriate occasion for something dramatically new that God wanted to do for the early followers of Jesus Christ. After Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead, He appeared to His faithful disciples, teaching them about the Kingdom of God that was soon to come. Gathering them together, He gave them this instruction:

Acts 1:4 He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Here is what, in fact, took place about a week and a half later, as recorded by Luke in Acts 2:

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

This created no small stir, not only among the disciples so filled, but in the city generally. A large crowd began to gather to observe in amazement, asking one another, “What does this mean?”

Some observers mocked what they saw, dismissing the disciples’ behavior as human foolishness. The twelve stood to address the crowd, and Peter announced that this was the fulfillment of ancient prophecy:

Acts 2:16 This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.