

“Pentecost: The Back Story”

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. ⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Acts 2:1-13 (NIV)

The account of Israel being rescued/released/liberated from slavery ...

“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.
³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.”

Exodus 12:2-3 (NIV)

Passover asks the question ... Can I get a fresh start? Can tomorrow be different? In Passover we see clearly the God of hope.

“Many other people went up with them,
as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.”

Exodus 12:38 (NIV)

ereb(v) rav – mixed multitude (motley crew, conglomeration, rag tag), all sorts of people were invited into this liberation

As slaves they're weren't free until Pharaoh was eliminated. In Exodus 14 & 15 they travel & celebrate their new-found freedom. After their defining moment they travel for 50 days (Pentecost).

“That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians,
and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.”

Exodus 14:30 (NIV)

In Exodus 19 ten words are given and they now have an identity, these people are called to show the world what God's saving love looks like.

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“In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—
on the very day--they came to the Desert of Sinai.”

Exodus 19:1 (NIV)

“On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, ¹⁹ and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.”

Exodus 19:16-19 (NIV)

Defining Characteristics of this Event ...

1. Thunder (Hebrew – kole (qolot): “and there was voices”)
2. Smoke (fire of God fell)

Sinai was the wilderness – free from any political or national rule

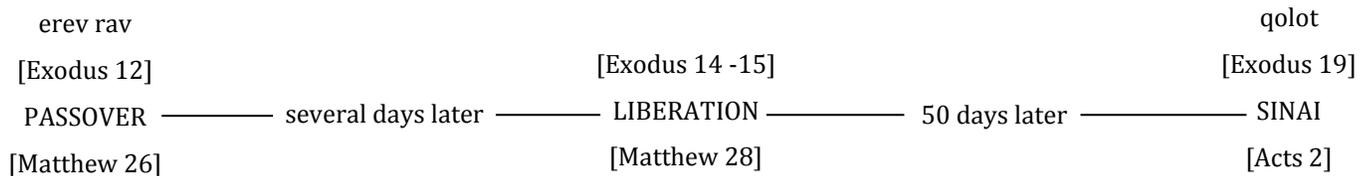
New Testament reality ... Matthew 26 (Passover) & 28 (Resurrection/Feast of Firstfruits)

Feast of Pentecost - voices & fire, Sinai is alive again! Taking God's saving love to the nations!!

The idea of the church is not that new, but yet it's radically different.

In Acts 2 a mixed, global group of people are being empowered. No spectating or simply being inspired; they're in it to the fullest ... Witnesses!

The church is chaordic (chaos & order). We need both. Within chaos is life – wonder & awe.



Do you have this fire, this wind?

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Alan Hirsch draws on Rodney Stark for statistical data. In the Roman Empire ...

In the Roman Empire ...

100 A.D. : 25,000 Christians (illegal to be a Christian, no buildings, no scriptures as we know it, hard to join)

320 A.D. : 20,000,000 Christians in the Roman Empire

from 25,000 to 20 million? in 200 years?

When Mao took power: 2 million Christians in China (banished all missionaries/ministers, nationalized all church property, killed all senior leaders, imprisoned the rest, banned all public Christian meetings)

When Mao died: 60 million Christians in China

Some estimate that today: 80 million Christians in China

Notes adapted from Rob Bell’s Message: *“They’ve Had Too Much Wine”* (May 17, 2009)