

WHAT WAS PENTECOST?

"Pentecost" comes from the Greek word *pentekosta*, which means 50. On the day that the Holy Spirit was poured upon the disciples in Jerusalem, the Feast of Weeks, called *Shavu'ot*, was being celebrated in the city by thousands of Jews (another name for this was the Feast of the Harvest). According to Leviticus 23:15, 16 and Deuteronomy 16:9, 10, it is observed 7 weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, thus on the 50th day. Jews celebrate *Shavu'ot* (today, commemorating the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai), Christians celebrate Pentecost.

Exactly fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead was the day of Pentecost.



PRE-PENTECOST PREP

Jesus' disciples spent the 10 days between His ascension and Pentecost by "continually devoting themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14) in a second-floor apartment. All the disciples and women were together (including Jesus' mom and brothers). ***Earnest prayer will change you.***

Ellen White's book, *The Acts of the Apostles*, provides great insight as to what transpired in that room:

- **They prayed:** "Now, in obedience to the word of the Savior, the disciples offered their supplications for this gift, and in heaven Christ added His intercession" (p. 37).
- **They humbled themselves:** "As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief" (p. 36).
- **They made emends:** "Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship" (p. 37).
- **They had their "aha moment":** "As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning" (p. 36).
- **They were all in:** "As they meditated upon His pure, holy life they felt that no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ's character" (p. 36).

THE EARLY RAIN IN YOUR LIFE

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that momentous Pentecostal day launched the New Testament Church. That church was organic, mobile, zesty, but not without human defects. That day was a game changer in the history of God's people, and the world has literally not been the same since.

LESSON 1

The spiritual early rain experience at Pentecost was like the early November rains in the land of Palestine that prepared the soil for seeding. *Pentecost was the prep for the spreading of the seed of the Gospel.*

LESSON 2

When you accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you can point to the Holy Spirit as the "culprit." Your "early rain" experience is when God, in His grace, gave you a new heart through the Spirit (Jn. 3:5-8; 14:17, 18, 23, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15; Eph. 3:14-20; Rom. 5:5). *This is your prep for the development of the Gospel in your life.*

LESSON 3

Your early rain experience launches you to develop in the Spirit: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). Sanctified and strengthened by the Spirit, you now seek to please God (Rom. 8:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:1, 2). *Your early rain experience is when, by God's grace, the Holy Spirit started you on a new path in godly living.*

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A REST AREA
ON THE HIGHWAY TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This early rain is a must-have experience in order to receive the powerful "latter rain" deluge of the Holy Spirit in the closing days of earth (lesson 7).

"Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection...There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire...It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. **But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former [early] rain.**"