

Acts 1:24: 'And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, ²⁵ That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. ²⁶ And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.'

Here, in Acts 1, is the only time Matthias is ever mentioned in the entire Bible. He is not Matthew, author of the first Gospel; the only thing we know about him is that he had been with the whole group for the entire ministry of Jesus: from His baptism, by John the Baptist, until He was taken up into Heaven and we only know that because of Peter's having said it was the first qualification for the one chosen to replace Judas.

Even though we know next to nothing about him, it's still a very big deal to be 'one of the 12.'

So... with that in mind... now, the 120 were all together in obedience to Jesus' command; *'He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.'* Acts 1:4

Being 'baptized with the Holy Ghost' is what...

And so... all 120 of them have been waiting and praying together for 10 days. How do we know it has been 10 days?

Verse 2:1: *'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.'*

The day of Pentecost **was fully come**, they were all with one accord in one place.'

The Day of Pentecost: that's how we know they've been waiting around for 10 days. Pentecost means 50... the day of Pentecost is the 50th day after Passover. We were told that Jesus remained with them for 40 days after His Resurrection. His Resurrection was the first day of the week: Sunday, the day after Passover. (Passover happened to fall on a Sabbath that year.) The Jewish month of Nissan, like every other month in the Jewish calendar, begins with the New Moon: first day of Nissan. Passover always falls on the 14th day of the Jewish calendar's month of Nisan at the time of the full moon. From that date, all the remaining dates and Feasts are determined each year.

The Jews count every partial day as 1 day. Jesus was crucified on Friday; He was hanging dead and had to be taken down before the start of Passover which began Friday at sundown, lasting until Saturday at sundown, during which He was in Sheol/Paradise, the place of the dead. Then, Sunday morning made the count as 3 **days in the grave**. Pentecost begins sundown of the 50th day after Passover which happened to fall on Sabbath/Saturday, that year (as God had planned). The next morning, then, is when the day of Pentecost was 'fully come.'

What is the meaning of a day's having '*fully come*'? The Day of Pentecost began the previous evening at sundown; after going through the entire nighttime, The Day of Pentecost was fully come at sunrise on Sunday.

They were all together and 'in one accord.' They were all in unison looking for what Jesus had promised but He, the Holy Spirit, did not come because they were 'all in one accord.' That would have meant that His coming was according to 'man's work;' He came when He came because that was the moment God, the Father, had always planned for Him to come.

We are to be ever in unison looking for what Jesus has promised us, in the Rapture: *'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'* John 14:1

By the same token, the Lord Jesus Christ's coming in the Rapture has no relationship to our being in unison, or our acting in unison, or our believing in unison, or to our believing IN unison, as if our being in unison affects God's actions. He will come at the exact moment God the Father has always planned.

Every born again believer will be taken in the Rapture *but only those who believe in, and are looking forward to, His coming in the Rapture will be awarded His special reward: **the Crown of Righteousness***. We know this because Paul told us so: *'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.'* 2Tim 4:8

Why is it a special reward? Why is it called the Crown 'of Righteousness?' How is it that we will receive it when so many others will not?

This Crown is special because only a certain percentage of the True Church will ever receive it. It is not called the Crown 'of Righteousness,' or awarded according to our being good enough or to our being super Christians or according to our own righteousness; none of us will have earned it by any works at all. We who look forward to His special coming for us, His True Church, will gain that special reward only because we believed His Word that His coming for us is sure and true.

4000 years ago: *'And **(Abraham) believed in the Lord**, (believed in His Word and that He was able and willing to accomplish His Word) and **(God) counted it to him for righteousness.**'* Gen 15:6

The Lord Jesus Christ said He would return, like a Thief in the night, to 'steal' His True Church away, to take us back to Heaven. To every True Christian who believes that promise to His Bride, spoken 2000 years ago, and looks for His coming, will be awarded *The Crown of Righteousness*.

From the time of Adam, believers were required to believe in, and look for, the Lord Jesus Christ's first appearance: from Bethlehem to the Cross. From the time of His Crucifixion and Resurrection, believers have been required to believe in His Second Coming. During the Tribulation, believers will be required to look for His Return at Armageddon. As an extra reward, the Crown of Righteousness, His Bride is required to believe in, earnestly look for and anxiously await His Second Coming in the Rapture, at an unknown day and time, before His return at Armageddon.

His Second Coming will occur in 2 phases: first, in the clouds for His Church and second, in power and glory at Armageddon.

What is Pentecost, Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks? (7 Weeks)

Passover memorialized Israel's having been set free from the slavery of Egypt. Their freedom was not the result of their own effort but was, rather, the result of God's work entirely. Egypt symbolizes the World and our slavery to sin. Our freedom from the slavery of sin/Egypt, is the result of our election and choice by God and, then, the result of His work of revealing Himself to each of us and then granting to each of us His gifts of repentance and of faith to believe. Our Salvation is according to God's work and His work alone.

The day after Passover is the Feast of First Fruits which symbolized God's provision in the Promised Land. The Lord Jesus Christ is, first, the spotless Passover Lamb, sacrificed for our Salvation: 'The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' John 1:29 ... and, He is the Firstfruits of all those raised to Eternal Life:

'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept... For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.' 1Cor 15:20

the *Feast of First Fruits* is the day after Passover.

Seven weeks later, (49 days+1) 50 days after Passover, is the Feast of Weeks/Shavuot or, Pentecost, meaning: fifty. The Feast of Weeks will be fully realized when the Lord Jesus Christ returns at Armageddon to set up His 1000-year Kingdom on Earth; it symbolizes God tabernacling among His people.

All Jewish males were required to make the trek to Jerusalem each year for Shavuot: the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus pays for our sin on Passover... He is the First Fruits unto Eternal Life... He will return to Tabernacle among us forever.

Also, of Firstfruits: *'For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

²³ *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.'* Rom 8:22

The coming of, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every believer is our 'firstfruits,' our 'down payment' of the full realization of 'Tabernacles' when we will, forever after, physically be with our Groom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What happened about 4500 years ago? Shortly after Noah and his family landed on Mt. Ararat, Nimrod, the first 'antichrist,' the first World Emperor, established the beginnings of Babylon; He organized all the people, together, to build the Tower of Babel. Everyone spoke the same language and the Tower signified the rebellious heart of mankind and their rejection of God, Whom Noah, and probably his son, Shem, had preached. God confounded their language in order to scatter mankind across the globe. One language became many tongues; one people became many peoples to spread out and away from the Plain of Shinar... later: Babylonia. All those same scattered peoples took with them, to every corner of the globe, the vestiges of the false, satanic Babylonian religion which later became the foundation of every false religious system throughout the entire history of Man.

Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth spread out across the World: Japheth's people traveled North and West; Ham's peoples traveled South and West; Shem's peoples traveled East and South.

Satan's plan in Babylonia, under Nimrod, was to organize all humanity, his people, in rebellion, to form an invasion against God's rule. Ever since that time, Satan has worked to organize as much of humanity, as possible, under succeeding empires: Babylon, Medes and Persians, Greece, Rome, the Holy Roman Empire and, today, a revived Roman Empire under the European Union and the United Nations, soon to be ruled by the final Antichrist. Under this newer, modern Empire, one of the unifying principles is becoming realized as: deadly hatred of Christians, Jews and Israel. Satan thinks he is causing it but, in fact, it is God Who is causing it in order to fulfill His Prophecy that, in these last days, He would force, and draw, all Jews back to Israel.

But God used something miraculously similar during the Church's birth at Pentecost. Instead of using all people, speaking the same language in rebellion toward God, God caused one people, His special people, the newly Christian Jews, to speak all the other languages at the birth of His newly created special people, the True Church, in order to spread His Holy Invasion, led by the Holy Spirit, to be taken around the known World, to fill up all the World, which will finally and fully be realized when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, at Armageddon, to destroy all of Satan's invasion, and people, and set up His Holy Invasion to establish His Righteous Kingdom throughout the World and then throughout the whole Universe.

Daniel explained Nebuchadnezzar's dream which foresaw this: *'...This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, ³³ His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.*

³⁴ Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. ³⁵ Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth... And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.' Daniel 2

Here's a thought: *the prince of darkness, through his kingdom of darkness, promotes to all his subjects, all those things which are experienced only through, and gratify only, the flesh. All of those things will ultimately fall to corruption or destruction, turning finally, to dust or ashes.*

The Prince of Peace, through His Kingdom of Light, offers to all His subjects, all those things, everlasting, which are experienced through His Spirit to our spirit (which began to happen at Pentecost) and which will ultimately be experienced, to the fullest, through our soon to come ultra-sensitive, eternally glorified new bodies like that of the Lord Jesus Christ; we will be like Him! Nothing about us will ever be corrupted or decayed, unless through physical death before the Rapture; our souls and spirits are now eternal and glorified; soon, our bodies

will be eternal and glorified like the Lord Jesus Christ's Own Body.

Verse 2: *'And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.'*

There was no wind involved, no 'mighty wind of the spirit,' only the **sound** as of a rushing, mighty wind; the **sound** filled all the house. But... what a great and frightening sound it must have been! It was a great **but singular event**.

The Crucifixion was a monumental event; it happened once for all, never to be necessary or repeated again. The Coming of the Holy Spirit to fill believers was a monumental event; it happened once for all, never to be necessary or repeated again, with 2 exceptions: regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit, when the Gospel was taken to the Gentile house of Cornelius in Acts 10: when they believed and were filled with the Holy Spirit: the sound of a mighty wind and tongues of fire upon the believers did not repeat but they did speak with other tongues; in Acts 19: when Paul found 12 Ephesians who had only been taught, by Apollos, to follow the teaching of John the Baptist, he then taught them the whole Gospel. He laid hands on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. The tongues were meant as a special proof to Peter, and to the Jews to whom he reported that the Gospel was sent by God unto the Gentiles also. The same was true with Paul's encounter with the 12 Ephesians. Paul didn't need a sign to understand that the Gospel was for the Gentiles; He was preaching to them all along but it was a sign for the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem.

Seldom has anything caused such division in the Church as has the misunderstanding of God's purpose for His sign-gifts, especially tongues.

Very simply, the time covered in the Book of Acts: the time between the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the completion of the various letters/epistles, written by the Apostles (and Luke), which would later be combined into what we now know of as 'The Bible'... about 30-60 years... **it was a special time of transition**. Something completely new and unknown was born on the Day of Pentecost: the True Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had fulfilled all the Law and Prophets; now, Salvation was offered solely on the basis of God's Grace through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As Peter, Paul, James and the rest were preaching and teaching the True Gospel, no one had a Bible to read and study. God used the sign-gifts: Miracles, knowledge, prophecy, and tongues to confirm the truth of what people were being told.

Paul told us clearly:

*'Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be **prophecies, they shall fail**; whether there be **tongues, they shall cease**; whether there be **knowledge, it shall vanish away**.⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.¹⁰ But **when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away**.¹¹ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, **I put away childish things**.¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.¹³ And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.'* 1Cor 13:8

The sign-gifts were 'in part,' various 'parts' to confirm the True Gospel. Paul is prophesying that when the 'perfect' has come... he does not mean when Jesus returns; he means when the full and complete written Word is finished, the sign-gifts, as confirmation of the Word, will cease; they will no longer be necessary.

The Greek word for perfect, here, is: teleios. It means: brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, perfect.

'The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.' Psalm 19:7

God's written Word is perfect. It is Its own confirmation; It needs no other proof.

When the New Testament was complete, it completed God's perfect Word, His complete Word to man.

'When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part will be done away.'

His next coming, one day soon, will be in the clouds, coming for His Bride.