



PENTECOST—

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

From Sinai to the Upper Room



ELDER KEITH JOEL WALKER

(An Apostolic Pentecostal Exposition)



PENTECOST — THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

*FROM SINAI TO THE UPPER
ROOM (AN APOSTOLIC
PENTECOSTAL EXPOSITION)*

Written by
Elder Keith Joel Walker

whpctuttle.com

Introduction

On the day of Pentecost the New Testament Church was born. That morning, in the upper room where the apostles waited, heaven broke into earth: wind, fire, tongues, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1–4). From that moment the divine program of completed Judaism — the New Covenant community birthed out of Israel’s feasts and promises — began to unfold. This sermon will trace the biblical connections from Sinai to Shavuot (Pentecost), show how Joel’s prophecy is fulfilled in Acts 2, set forth the Apostolic Pentecostal plan of salvation (repentance, water baptism in Jesus’ Name, and Spirit baptism with tongues), examine Ezekiel and Jeremiah’s promises of a new heart and a new covenant, and conclude with pastoral application and an urgent call to repentance and receiving the fullness of God.

I. Sinai, Shavuot, and the Two-Loaves Feast: Roots of Pentecost

Pentecost in the New Testament is not an isolated event. It is rooted in Israel’s sacred calendar and in the memory of Sinai. The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the wave-sheaf offering which followed the Passover (Leviticus 23:15–21). Shavuot commemorated the wheat harvest and, in Jewish tradition, the giving of the Torah at

Sinai. On this feast two loaves of waved bread—made from the firstfruits of the wheat harvest—were presented before the LORD (Leviticus 23:17). The two loaves bear typological weight: they stand at the junction of God’s covenant grace in the past and its fulfillment.

The ministry of the Law at Sinai, the giving of the written Torah, was a foundational act of God’s covenant with Israel. But the prophets anticipated a time when God would do a new thing—not simply give law written on tablets, but write His law upon men’s hearts (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:24–28). Pentecost, therefore, is the moment of fulfillment: the Spirit comes, the law becomes internal, and the new covenant community is formed. Jewish commentator tradition (Rashi and others) rightly emphasizes the centrality of Sinai for Shavuot; Christians see that Sinai prepared the way for the Spirit’s outpouring at the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promises.

II. Joel’s Prophecy and Peter’s Declaration

Joel had declared, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh... and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth” (Joel 2:28–30). The Day of Pentecost is Peter’s moment to say: this is that day. When tongues

like fire appeared, when a sound like a mighty rushing wind filled the house, and people from many nations heard the disciples speak in their languages, Peter stood up and said plainly, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16).

Peter’s sermon is crucial for Apostolic Pentecostals because it ties the visible, experiential manifestation of the Spirit to the prophetic Word of God. The Spirit is not a private feeling; He is the promised gift of the Father (Acts 2:33) and the sign that the New Covenant has come. The outpouring confirms that the age of fulfillment has dawned: the law written on stone is now fulfilled by the Spirit writing God’s will on human hearts.

III. The Upper Room: Birthplace of the New Covenant Church

Acts 2:1–4 gives a simple but decisive account: the disciples were together in one place; the Holy Ghost descended; they were filled and began to speak with other tongues. This corporate experience marks the ecclesial birth. The Church is not an institution invented by men; it is the Body of Christ birthed when the Spirit came to gather those whom Jesus redeemed.

Several points stand out:

- The timing: Pentecost, the feast celebrating God’s covenant gift, is when God pours out the Spirit in fullness (Acts 2:1).
- The manner: it was power from on high (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), accompanied by visible signs (wind, tongues, fire), pointing to both divine origin and public proclamation.
- The result: conviction, repentance, and conversion — three thousand souls were saved that day (Acts 2:41). The Church’s birth is missionary by nature: it immediately proclaims the Lordship of Jesus.

IV. The Apostolic Plan of Salvation: Acts 2:38 in Practice

Peter’s message includes an indispensable call: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). For Apostolic Pentecostals this is not optional; it is the apostolic pattern. The New Testament pattern combines:

1. Repentance — a turning from sin, a change of mind and life.
2. Water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ — the mikveh of the New Covenant, identifying the believer with the Name that saves (Acts 4:12).
3. Baptism in the Holy Ghost with the evidence

of speaking in tongues — the sign that seals and empowers the believer for witness (Acts 2:4; Acts 10:44–46; Acts 19:1–6).

This threefold pattern is not a mere liturgical preference but the apostolic delivery of Christ’s saving work. The early church’s practice demonstrates the relationship between water and Spirit: many who repented received both water baptism and Spirit baptism (Acts 2:41–42, 8:12–17, 10:44–48, 19:1–6). The result is a baptized people: baptized into Christ’s death, raised to newness of life, and filled with the Spirit to bear witness and to be sanctified.

V. Ezekiel and Jeremiah: From Heart of Stone to Heart of Flesh

The prophets echo the same promise that Acts fulfills. Ezekiel said, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you... I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26–27). Jeremiah promised a new covenant: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:33). These were not national reforms only; they were spiritual transformations.

Pentecost is the demonstration of God’s doing what

the prophets foretold. The inward law, the indwelling Spirit, the new heart — these are realities when the Holy Ghost is poured out. The Church is the people who have experienced that divine surgery: sin forgiven (Acts 2:38), the old man crucified in baptism, and the new life sustained by the Spirit. The valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) also speaks of God’s power to bring life where there was death; the assembly at Pentecost is the first major witness in the era of the Spirit that God can and does raise a spiritually dead world into life.

VI. Completed Judaism: The Church as the True Israel of God

Paul speaks of true Israel in spiritual terms: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart... that is in the spirit, and not in the letter” (Romans 2:28–29). He also unfolds how Gentiles are grafted into Abraham’s promise by faith (Romans 4; Romans 9–11). The Apostolic Pentecostal conviction is that the Church, birthed at Pentecost, fulfills the covenant purpose: it is the blood-covenant people of God, composed of those reborn of water and Spirit.

This is not an act of contempt toward ethnic Israel. Scripture itself predicts a future restoration of national Israel (Romans 11). But the present reality

of God’s covenant people is realized in those who have been born again — Jewish or Gentile — who confess Jesus as Lord, are baptized in His Name, and are filled with the Spirit. Acts 2 demonstrates that the Church is not a human construct but the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan — the true Israel of God taking up the mantle of spiritual covenant life.

VII. Jesus as Jehovah: Old Testament Claims Fulfilled in the Christ

The Old Testament is full of divine claims that the apostles and Paul apply to Jesus. The Name YHWH, “I AM,” the titles “Mighty God” and “Everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6), and declarations like “besides me there is no savior” (Isaiah 43:11) find their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. The Gospel writers and apostles apply these texts to the Messiah: John’s “I am” statements (John 8:58), Peter’s declaration of Jesus as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), and Paul’s insistence that Christ is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15–20; 2:9).

When Pentecost comes, it crowns the revelation that Jesus is God manifested in the flesh. The Spirit comes from the Father in the Name of Jesus (Acts 2:33) and vindicates the risen Christ as both Lord and God. The New Covenant community therefore worships Jesus as Jehovah — the Lord who saved, baptizes in His

Name, and looks for His return.

VIII. Rashi and the Jewish Understanding of Shavuot: Respectful Engagement

Medieval Jewish sages like Rashi highlight Sinai as the core meaning of Shavuot. Rashi's reading centers on Torah, law, and covenant — rightly seeing God's giving as the feast's heart. Christians should honor that insight: Pentecost is not an arbitrary event but a fulfillment related to Sinai. Rashi and rabbinic literature do not accept Jesus as Messiah; Christians must respect that theological difference while pointing to the New Covenant fulfillment the apostles declared. This respectful engagement enables gospel witness without caricature.

IX. The Practical Gospel: What Pentecost Means for Us Today

Pentecost is not only an historical event to admire; it is a present reality to receive. The Church must never reduce Pentecost to sentimental memory. Instead:

- Preach repentance: Pentecost is followed by conviction and response (Acts 2:37–41). True birth begins with repentance.
- Call to baptism in Jesus' Name: Baptism is the visible sign of identification with Christ's Name, the

only Name of salvation (Acts 4:12).

- Urge the baptism of the Holy Ghost: Seek the infilling with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. This is not optional but the apostolic normative experience that empowers witness (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4).
- Live as a Spirit-formed people: The new heart produces holiness, love, and evangelistic zeal. The Church's mission is to preach the Name until He returns.

X. Conclusion and Invitation

The birth of the church at Pentecost is the climactic fulfillment of God's ancient purposes. From Sinai's giving of the Law to Joel's prophecy to the outpouring in the upper room, Scripture narrates a single plan: God prepares, promises, and then pours out. The apostles' message remains the same for sinners today: repent, be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:38).

If you have never repented and been baptized in Jesus' Name, do so now. If you have not yet received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of tongues, seek it with prayer and expectancy. Pentecost is not an artifact of the past — it is God's

present gift. Come to the upper room of prayer; humble yourself, call upon the Lord Jesus, be immersed in His Name, and receive the Spirit who writes God's law upon your heart and empowers you to witness. The Church that was born at Pentecost lives on today in every believer transformed by water and Spirit. Let us live and proclaim that reality until He comes.

Closing Scripture to Proclaim: Acts 2:16–21; Acts 2:36–38; Ezekiel 36:26–27.

Benediction: May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by the baptism of the Holy Ghost birthed His Church on the day of Pentecost, fill you now with power to live, witness, and worship, in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Written By Elder Keith Joel Walker