

# JEW<sup>S</sup> F<sup>OR</sup> JESUS

established 32 A.D., give or take a year

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## The Day Pentecost Was Fulfilled\* by David Brickner, Executive Director

**T**his month, the Festival of Pentecost will slip past most Jews and Christians unnoticed; yet it is one of the three most important festivals in the Old Testament and it marks a pivotal point in the history of Christianity.

Allow me to transport you back to that event, and to the day when this festival of Israel was fulfilled. Imagine that it is the morning of *Shavuot*, the Day of Pentecost (June 9–10) and you have traveled a far distance from the Isle of Crete to fulfill the Lord's command (*Deuteronomy 16:16*). You awake to the loud voice of a Temple official, booming out, "Arise! Let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God!" It is time to make your way up to Jerusalem, to offer your basket of firstfruits before the Lord in His holy Temple.

You are part of a throng of pilgrims pressing on to the Temple entrance when a powerful sound "like the blowing of a violent wind . . ." (*Acts 2:2*) arrests your attention.

You stop in your tracks.

What could such a sound mean on a sunny Jerusalem day? Curiosity draws you onward. When you reach the source of this compelling sound there is no explanation, only more questions and confusion:



*"When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language" (verse 6).*

From the midst of a cacophony of languages you do not understand, you hear familiar words speaking praise to God in the language of your own hometown. You scan the crowd and find the man who is speaking your language, but he is

surely not from Crete! How can this be? What does it all mean?

Someone next to you calls out: "*They have had too much wine*" (verse 13). Several more yell similar accusations, but this makes no sense to you.

Suddenly a swarthy young man with piercing eyes, a compelling countenance, and a confident, almost glowing appearance stands up and begins to explain: "*Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel*" (verses 14–15).

And so, the Feast of Pentecost was fulfilled as God empowered His people to follow their destiny to bless all the nations of the world. This was the historic day on which the power of God began to undo an ancient tragedy – the day God "reversed the curse" of Babel.

Many focus on the signs or special effects that accompanied this day, but those Pentecost signs pointed to past events to help us understand God's purposes. In particular, they pointed back to Mount Sinai and the giving of the Law. Jewish tradition holds that God gave the Law on Pentecost, and Acts 2 certainly seems to reflect that belief.

Exodus 20 tells us that when Moses went to receive the Law, the entire nation of Israel was in mortal fear over the smoking mountain and the sounds of thunder and trumpets that accompanied the sight. Descriptions beyond that scripture shed further light on that special day in first century Jerusalem.

We are told that at Mount Sinai, a sound from heaven, like that of a ram's horn or trumpet, increased in volume so that it was inescapably loud. I don't know if it is fair to compare the sound of the ram's horn to "the blowing of a violent wind." Clearly the sound was startling to begin with and crescendoed until it was practically unbearable. Have you ever been jolted by an increasingly loud noise? You can actually feel the sound filling your head, vibrating throughout your entire body.

Along with the sound came a visual display that would make Fourth of July fireworks seem like a child's sparkler. Exodus 19:18 tells us that the Lord descended in fire on the mountain, but other Jewish sources provide additional imagery. An ancient manuscript called a targum, found in a library in Egypt, states the following: "The first commandment, when it left the mouth of the Holy One . . . as meteors and lightning and as torches of fire; a fiery torch to its right and a fiery torch to its left, which burst forth and flew in the air of the heavenly expanse; it proceeded to circle around the camp of Israel."

These accounts are similar to the biblical accounts in Exodus and of King David: *"The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness"*

(Psalm 29:7-8 NKJV). God's "special effects" at Sinai grabbed the attention of the children of Israel and etched the giving of the Law into the collective memory of the Jewish people.

The traditions concerning the giving of the Law would certainly have been known to the disciples in the upper room and to the crowds in Jerusalem that day. When they heard the sound from heaven, it would have been natural to make the connection back to Exodus.

And then there were the divided tongues, as of fire, on each disciple. According to Acts 1:15 there were at least 120 disciples there that day. That is a lot of flame – more like a conflagration! Once again this harkens back to the Mount Sinai experience.

But before the disciples could assimilate the overpowering sound of rushing wind and the dazzling sight of flaming tongues, they found themselves involuntarily speaking in languages they had never learned and did not know. It must have seemed like a dream. Their mouths were moving, their lips and tongues were fully engaged, but what in the world were they saying? Perhaps in some wonderful way the Lord arranged for the hundred and twenty to know they were uttering praises, *"the wonderful works of God"* (Acts 2:11 NKJV).

According to Jewish tradition, when God marked out the nations in Genesis 10, He divided them into 70 nations. Following that, Genesis 11 tells the story of the Tower of Babel where God, in His judgment, confused the languages of those 70

nations and divided them through an inability to communicate.

Another Jewish tradition states that when God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, each of the 70 elders of Israel had flames above their heads, representing the languages of the 70 nations of the world. This illustrates God's intention that all of the nations would see and hear; God's self-revelation at Sinai was to be carried to all nations in accordance with His love for all people.

Whereas God had confused the languages back at the Tower of Babel in order to separate the people, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit used the diverse languages to unite His people from every tribe and tongue and nation. And with this miraculous declaration of His Word on Pentecost (Acts 2), the hope that all nations could come to faith in the God of Israel had begun to be realised. Just as Israel bore witness to the one true God in seeking to follow the Torah, we who follow Messiah today can also take part in the true fulfillment of Pentecost as we bear witness to His death, burial, and resurrection to all the nations of the earth.

\*Condensed and adapted from Chapter Six of *Christ in the Feast of Pentecost*

*To learn more about Pentecost as both a Jewish and Christian holiday, we recommend this book by David Brickner and Rich Robinson. It contains all you need to understand, appreciate and even celebrate this wonderful Old and New Testament festival. Please see page 6 to order.*

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# PENTECOST QUIZ

**Pentecost is:**

**A.** the amount of money that it cost to build the Pentagon

**B.** the Greek name for the Jewish holiday Shavuot, a harvest festival that falls 50 days after Passover

**C.** the Christian holiday commemorating the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send a helper to enable His disciples to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth

**D.** what happens when people keep their feelings pent up for too long

**C.** in the Sistine Chapel

**D.** in a submarine



**3. According to tradition, the days leading up to Pentecost were marked by counting the \_\_\_?**

**A.** number of square feet that comprise the floor of the Pentagon



**B.** "Omer" which is a biblical measure of grain

**C.** Number of languages spoken in churches throughout the world

**D.** Angels that can dance on the head of a pin



**2. Pentecost was one of three holidays to be celebrated:**

**A.** in Washington D.C.

**B.** in Jerusalem

**ANSWERS:**

1. **B** and **C** (tricky!); 2. **B**; 3. **B**.

# Prayer Prompters

Please pray:

✧ That many Israelis will read the advert and order the books we have offered.

✧ For the Lord to give us the courage to continue evangelising despite what comes against us. There is a chance that our newspaper advert will inflame the anti-missionary groups and others who oppose the gospel.

✧ For our BYG Israel follow-up. We now have contact information for over 2000 Israelis that want to hear more about Y'shua.

✧ For the health and energy of our follow-up team.

✧ "For our staff missionaries as they follow-up on the all the seekers from the campaign who have requested more information. Praise God that 30 Israelis so far have given their lives to Y'shua and there are another 2000 we need to follow-up on."

# The seed is being sown with BYG Israel



## REPORTS FROM OUR CAMPAIGNERS:

Bimini approached a Chassidic man named Joseph who had read the New Testament. He listened with great interest and said it's very possible that Jesus could be the Messiah. He didn't give his contact information, but said, 'God bless you' when she left. She also met Avi and Avlina, who had gotten a New Testament in the mail. They read it daily and really like it. They were proud to report that this morning they had read Matthew, chapter six! They gave their information for follow-up contact.

Tom did calling today and reached a man named Israel Goldstein. When asked if he had interest in the New Testament, he said, 'I have a Christian friend, your president ...George Bush. I knew him in Texas 27 years ago. Out of respect for him I'd like a New Testament.' He wondered if Tom had George's phone number so he could be in touch!

Aaron and his team were at the central bus station, expecting some problems but praying that they would be protected.



They were surrounded by many religious people, but had no problems until a minute before they finished when the anti-missionaries showed up. At that point there was nothing for our opponents to do. The good news is that one of our volunteers got 10 contacts on that outing!

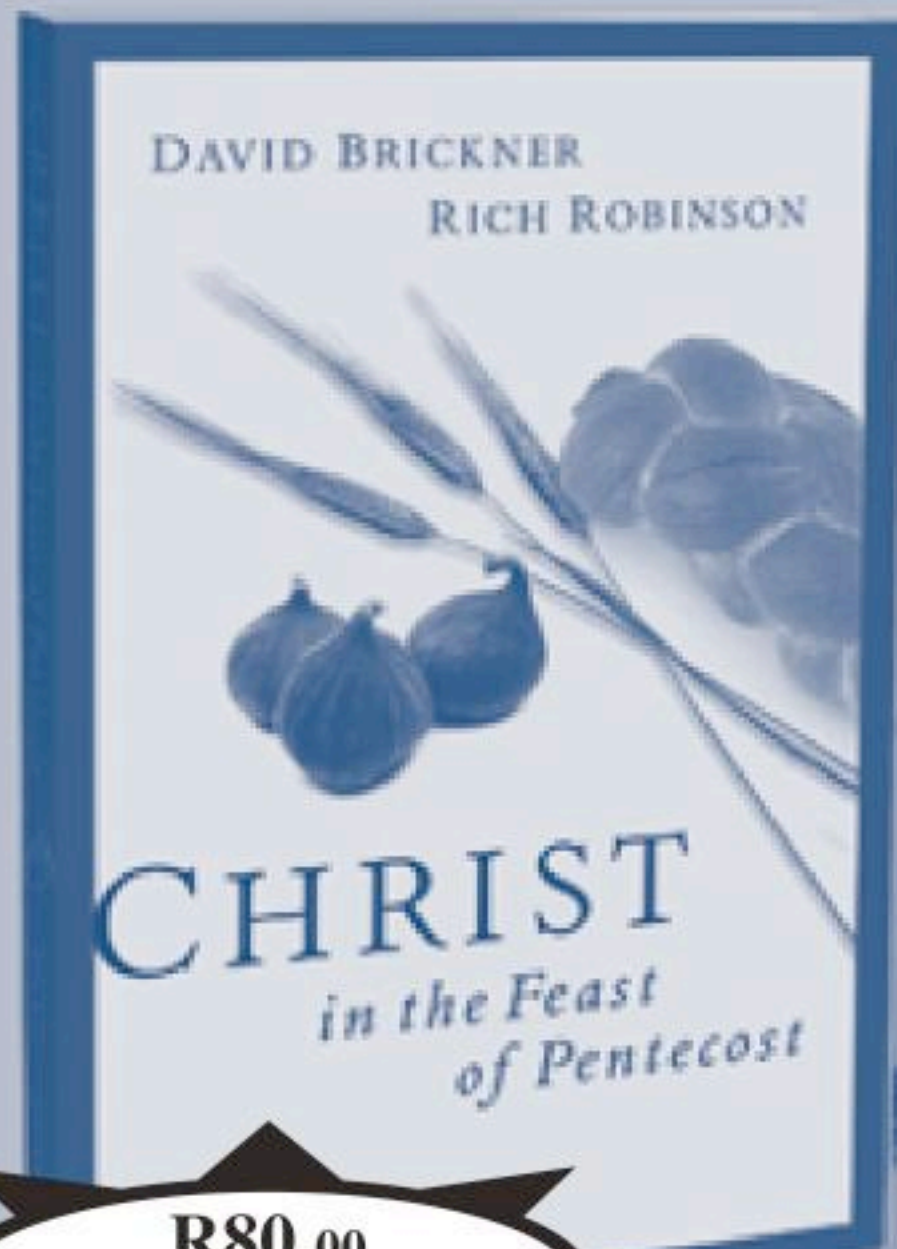
Susan and her team were at the Tel Aviv University and though there weren't many people, they had several



# New books available!

## Christ in the Feast of Pentecost

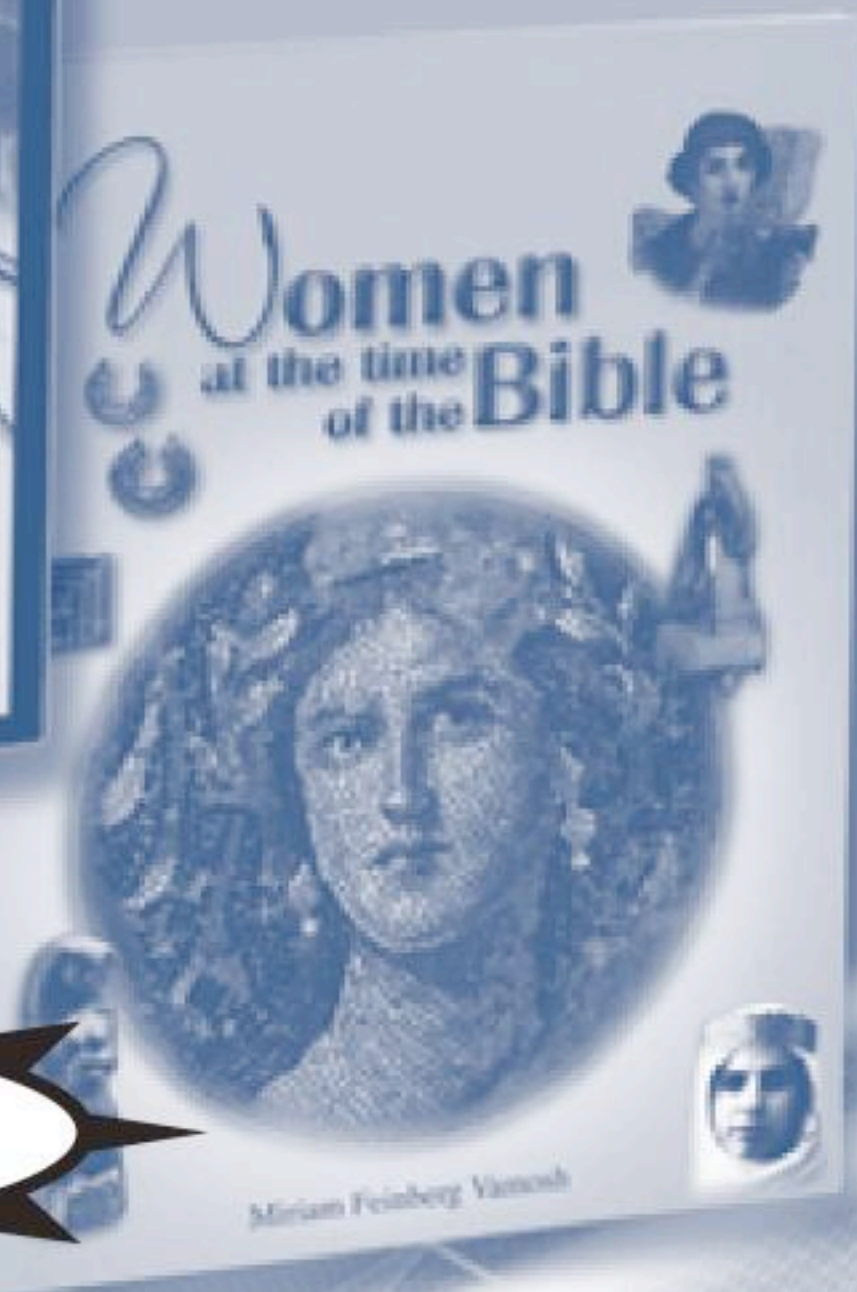
David Brickner and Rich Robinson



**R80.00**  
(Post, packaging and insurance R15.00)

**R100.00**  
(Post, packaging and insurance R15.00)

This book rounds out the series so that all three Aliyah Festivals are covered in this series (Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles and Christ in the Passover). David Brickner and Rich Robinson invite you to explore the origins of the Christian holiday that many consider the birthday of the Church. Why did God choose this Jewish holiday to empower His disciples to fulfil the Great Commission? What lessons for today does this ancient holiday offer? Christ in the Feast of Pentecost addresses these and other questions. Studying the Feast of Pentecost helps us understand such New Testament references as the 'First Fruits' and the biblical view of Pentecost in the book of Acts. It provides not only history and background, but a variety of applications to satisfy the heart, the mind, and even, the culinary palette for those who are game to try the recipes offered as one of several appendixes.



## Women at the Time of the Bible

Miriam Feinberg Vamosh

The author of this book is no stranger to our readers of books such as Food at the Time of the Bible and Daily Life at the Time of Jesus. In this NEW book on the lives of women during biblical times, Feinberg Vamosh is as thorough and engaging as she is in all her other books. Each chapter reveals a different aspect of a woman's life in Bible times, from her education and contribution to the community to her dress and adornments. Included are full-colour photographs and drawings of rare and beautiful finds unearthed in the Holy Land. This book also puts into perspective the lives of some prolific women during Bible times such as Ruth, Miriam, Rebekah and several others.