

ACTS: The Next Chapter

GOD'S FAMILY GROWS UP

Acts 2:1-4

Parenting moves through different stages that require different strategies. The infancy stage demands a lot of **love**. During the childhood stage, **laws** need to be laid down. In the adulthood stage, **liberty** needs to be extended.

Starting with Abraham and Sarah, God has been raising up a family for himself. The story of his family follows the same stages and strategies. During the age of the Patriarchs, God extended a lot of **love** toward his family. At Mount Sinai, God laid down the **law**.

From the beginning, God wanted more for his family. He wanted a family of grownups who represent him and conduct family business not because they're scared of punishment, but because they love their Father. So, when the time was right, God sent his one and only Son to pay the penalty for every transgression ever committed and to **liberate** his human family from the burden of the law.

Jesus didn't free us from the law so that we could go on breaking it, but to make us God's grownup children. *That's what happened at Pentecost.*

When we read Acts 2:1-4, it's easy to get caught up in the controversy between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal Christians, but that's not what these verses are about. **These verses show that the Christian church is not just the continuation of Jesus' story, it is also the natural progression and next stage in the story of God's family.** It tells how God moved his family from childhood to adulthood.

This message becomes clear when we compare Acts 2:1-4 to Exodus 19:16-19. Exodus 19 tells us what happened at Mount Sinai after God delivered Israel from Egypt. This is where God moved his family from

infancy to childhood. This is where God laid down the law. So let's compare...

The first point of comparison is that both events took place on the same day: fifty days after Passover. This tells us that both events are part of the same story, and that Pentecost is a new chapter in that story. *In fact, Pentecost is to the Christian church what Mount Sinai was to Israel.*

The second point of comparison is that God's coming was announced by spectacular atmospheric conditions. At Sinai, God's coming was announced by thunder, lightning and thick clouds. At Pentecost, God's coming was announced by a mighty rushing wind. *The atmospheric conditions let people know that God was coming to do something new in the story of his family.*

Another point of comparison is that God's personal presence was signaled by fire. But this is where a big difference shows up. At Sinai, the fire was at a distance and only Moses could approach it. At Pentecost, the fire rested on each person in the room. *Every Spirit-baptized believer packs the power of Pentecost wherever they go.*

A fourth point of comparison involves divine communication through human mediums. At both events God speaks through human beings. But once again there are big differences. At Sinai, God spoke only through Moses and only to Israel, after he had inscribed his commandments on stone tablets. At Pentecost, God's Spirit spoke through each disciple to every language group present in Jerusalem, after he had written God's law on their hearts.

The religion of the Old Testament was a religion for children. It was based on laws and commandments, and the way people proved their allegiance to God was by keeping those laws and commandments. The religion of the New Testament is a religion for grownups. In fact, it's less of a religion and more of a relationship. The way we prove our allegiance to God is less by keeping rules and more by keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25). When we do that, the Bible declares, we fulfill the requirements of the law without even trying.