

Questions about Pentecostals

An unofficial compilation of answers to your questions!

I know you have a million questions. I also know you have a million objections. If you didn't you would not be a normal person. Where do you begin? Catch up with me and let's look at what might help in your understanding your upcoming meeting with destiny in the experience of salvation!

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Q: What is Pentecost?

Q: Why do you call the church "Apostolic" ?

Q: How can you say you "have the truth" ?

Q: Why are you so intent on using the Bible in your lives, and discussions?

Q: Is there some reason why I haven't experienced this "Pentecost "yet and others have ?

Q: What happens at a typical gathering of Apostolics ?

Q: Are Apostolics protestant or Catholic ?

Q: Why do other Christian groups say things about Apostolics, such as calling them a "cult" ?

Q: Do you believe in world peace, and in global unity ?

Q: What will happen to me, if I "get into" this Pentecost thing?

What is "Pentecost?"

Pentecost literally means FIFTY, and originally referred to a feast on the ancient Hebrew calendar on which Israel was commanded to offer of the first part of their harvest. The feast was fifty days after the Passover feast. Like so much of the 2000 year history of the "chosen people", the Pentecost feast was a forth telling of a great blessing that was to come. God used the wheat as a symbol of the peoples of the earth. God is now, and always has been, working toward a harvest of souls. When wheat is ready for harvest, it is taken from where it has grown, and combined together with other wheat which is fully mature. The next step will be the making of breads. When time was right, God began the harvest of souls in this era, FIFTY DAYS after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. To be a part

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of the harvest, men and women needed to be born again.

This is not complicated, but needful. A great promise of the sending down of the Spirit of God had been heard, and long awaited. People understood that the "rain of the Holy Ghost" would be the greatest gift and blessing that man had ever known. They also knew it was needful for people to reach their true potential, and to have a face to face relationship with the Living God. But none had experienced it yet, because it was not yet given. When the true and ultimate Passover lamb was offered on the cross, by hands of hateful but blinded men, the course was prepared for the final harvest too begin.

In JESUS NAME a person's record of sin's could now be washed away. With just one more element, people could now be gathered into the harvest, and brought into the presence of Eternal God.

This element? The Spirit of God Himself, filling the seeker of God. God fulfilled His promise on the very calendar day, which had symbolized it for a thousand years. We cannot be easily confused about the meaning of it. The apostle's understood, and told us through the scriptures, Pentecost is the experience of that filling of the Holy Ghost, which began nearly 2000 years ago, and is continuing today wherever people will believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, receiving Him as God and Savior, and obeying Him, receiving His promise of the Spirit. Since God desires to embrace and save every single person ever born, no matter what their background, state of being, race or religion, that promise is specifically for YOU today, and God is calling you today to look into this more carefully.

Why are you called "Apostolic"

Some religions, and even Christian movements or denominations derive their names from the founders or practices of those who laid down their heritage.
For example

Lutherans - following and repeating the ideas of Luther

Wesleyans - following and believing in the interpretations of Wesley

Baptists - doing according to the practice of those who baptized

Methodists - following the Wesleyan idea of methodical salvation

Bhuddists - followers and believers in Buddah

Moravians - religious practitioners associated with historical movement in Moravia.

Quakers - One of their observed actions was "quaking", in the old days.

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You see?

All have something to do with their "founders". So, you say, a Christian simply ought to be named Christ. Well, OK. That's a good thought. It is important in another way, which you will read of in these WWW pages. But, while Jesus Christ is indeed the architect and builder of His church, its foundations are in ... you guessed it: the Apostles. This first generation were in every respect what God intended when He began to build His church.

Being transformed and receiving a supernatural relationship with God cannot be accomplished by men and women. God had to do it, and He did! The power to become the children of God was given to certain individuals who were Jesus' disciples. Whatever God intended for us to have, he first gave them, AND he gave them special status so that their WORDS and AUTHORITY has prevailed over 2000 years.

In this way, He could assure that there would be valid (corresponding to scripture), and repeated opportunity for everyone, in successive generations to receive the truth. He gave them something to anchor their teaching to, and a standard to meet. Of course, religious teachers can still teach their own ideas (false doctrines), and mislead those who follow blindly, but those who want validation, can check the word of the Apostles, and be safe.

When you hear about Jesus today, you hear because someone is repeating their words. They preach to us across 2000 years. Think about it. God also gave them a special appointment to deliver the gospel to all the people of the world. Everything needs some validation, otherwise, it's just another idea, of one of 6 billion people. IN the same was that the reputation of Luther gives some credence to Lutherans, the authority of the Apostolic is derived from the Apostles. They taught that His church is built upon the foundations of the Apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ himself is the cornerstone. If you want to be confident in a spiritual experience today, and know that the Lord Jesus Christ is clearly in view when we pray, worship, and life before God, what better way that to come into agreement with Jesus'

REAL teachers, the Apostles. We are called Apostolic because of a commitment to stay in subjection to the doctrines which they , the Apostles, preached, according to the scripture. Thank God, He confirms this obedience by sending the showering blessings of the Holy Ghost, and keeps us fresh and alive in love and power!

How can we say we "have the truth"?

It sounds outrageous to our sophisticated ears. Why the outrage? We have learned from society there is no absolute truth. We have also learned that no one is really any better off than anyone else. The main correlary is, "to be completely fair, one may have many wonderful thoughts, but none are of any advantage to the individual". That allows us to say that a brain surgeon and a ditchdigger are equally valuable. The root principle here is Christian. The foolish misapplication is not. God loves all, and there are none that impress Him with their knowledge, but He has offered to everyone, a way to be saved. Do you believe a person with a

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map, and a desire to find his or her way out of the woods stands a better chance than the person who sees only endless trees and no clear path? There are two main statements being made here, and both are in opposition to the conventional wisdom.

***** There is ONE truth, not many truths *****

You can have access to, and receive the truth and be blessed, while another may pass it by and suffer loss. The knowledge you receive and what you do with it does make a difference! Paul referred to the gospel as "my gospel". Did he create it? Of course not! But the truth is very precious. When you have something valuable, you are pleased to let others know. It's glory and beauty and importance supercedes much else concerning our lives. The young man who gets his first hot car knows something about how a prize can eclipse much that was formerly held important. Yes, we say we have the truth. It implies that someone else may not. But, unlike that slick car which cost many thousands of dollars, this precious truth is offered to you if you will only value it. Before us, many noble people died under persecution so that we could have the truth. Will we live so that we can have it?

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Why do you attach such an importance to the Bible? Why should I?

Good question. It's because the Bible is unlike a normal book. If God wanted to communicate with you, how would he do it? Do you wait for a phone call? A special dream? I've had both, and perhaps the dream was from God. Honestly, I'm not completely sure. But I am sure that God wants required a definite method to communicate with people.

The Bible is that means. It is, as I said earlier, much more than a normal book. There are many things, which could be said about the Bible. (yes, there are many poor excuses for scripture, which today are called Bibles and are somewhat defective - that's another story we'll get to sometime) We could say that It has incomparable quality of prose, and magnificent depth. It is unchallenged in prophetic terms containing hundreds of predictions, and clear references to future events, which have been, or are presently being fulfilled before our eyes. It is honest, and direct concerning human nature In spite of the petty claims of critics, it is self-consistent, and consistently harmonious. Archeologically, it has been proven historically accurate. Scientific elements are amazingly orderly and consistent with much modern science.

But for more than any of these reasons, I recommend that you look at the Bible, and begin to study it in depth. The reason? It meets the need.

You see, it is the word of God, and His mind is conveyed to us in that. The word of God is not like the work of fickle and transitory men. He never lies. All truth which is born directly of Him. His word, as such, occupies a higher realm than the laws of physics. It is not a resident of time, but stretches beyond the curtains which shields us from an incomprehensible eternity.

The Word of God is authority for doctrine, or teaching. It provides

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guidance. It heals. It is personal, and universal. It is particular, while providential in scope. The word believed substantiates the belief if God's promise and things happen! The weak and made strong. Human beings who could never tell the truth, or be dependable are transformed and instilled with character through the word. Perhaps most importantly, it brings light into conclusion and darkness. Peace results when the authority of the word reigns. We contend for the word, and it pays off. God lives to fulfill promises and God never lies.

Why have I not received this "Pentecost experience" yet?

You may be a teenager, housewife, college student, theologian, engineer, or "in between identities", so to speak. But God is calling to you today. You may read these notes and ignore them, thinking that you can pick and choose your experiences. It is true, you have a right to pick and choose, but you don't always get what you expected. For example, you have not yet believed in such a manner as to receive the Holy Ghost, but you and I are not the giver of that gift. God is, and who are we to question him? This is one of the issues that really causes people to wonder.

"Why now?
Why not yesterday?"

Perhaps you know a friend who got filled with the Holy Ghost, and seemed to change a lot. "Why did this person get into this, and I didn't? I'm not sure about this type of thing!" The problem is because we are talking about experience. People may claim to believe things, and moderate their communication. They may reveal or hide their thoughts. And, thoughts change. But an Apostolic encounter with God, and the new birth, is an experience. As you know, experiences happen when they happen ... Experiences change our lives. Tragedies bring sorrow and heartache. This is the opposite. Ever hear the saying "It's not a problem, it's an opportunity!"? When the gospel comes to you, that is your opportunity for a change in life. Perhaps you have a best friend or companion. You enjoy time together, as circumstances allow, but you would not expect to die at the same moment.

So God calls who and when he chooses. While he will eventually call everyone, perhaps some more than once, maybe numerous times during their lives, there are channels which he works through. Often a wife will receive a touch from God, and begin to seek Him before her husband. The husband thinks the whole thing is silly, but through the patience and faith of that loving woman, both come into the truth. Though you may read on, and think you are browsing, these ideas will return to you again.

Why not heed the voice of God and diligently seek out your encounter with Him?

We can pray with you, and arrange for people near to you to meet with you so that you can receive the Holy Ghost.

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What happens at a typical gathering of Apostolics?

When you have the opportunity to come into a meetings where Apostolics are gathered, all kinds of things might happen, some things definitely will happen. You might come to a fellowship rally, a worship service, an outreach event, a "singspiration" or musical worship event, or perhaps you will be invited to a home meeting.

When Apostolics get together there will be:

Praise and Worship.

People who love the Lord take the time to honor him in their actions and with their voices. There will be vocal and perhaps loud verbal prayer, and praise. Maybe shouting or even spontaneous dancing. Maybe you don't do that in social gatherings, but even if you're at a barbeque, or a sporting event with Apostolic people, and they get happy in the Holy Ghost, you are going to hear Jesus Christ's name being honored, and people speaking openly about the wonders of God's love! It's because He is present!

Prayer God's people have learned that God is intimately involved with our lives. Sometimes we have learned the hard way, through neglect, that God very much wants us to pray: to pray together, and to pray often. He has taught us to stay close to Him. If you are with Apostolics and they ask you to pray with them, just relax and talk to God in your own way. Listen for the sound of God's voice in your own heart, and remember, it is safe in the presence of God. Consider the gentleness of Jesus Christ. It is His spirit, which you will feel, as you pray together with your friends. Singing For some reason, Pentecostal people love to sing.

Perhaps it is the reality of the lovely verse in book of Psalms: And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. - Ps 40:3

Speaking in other tongues

Prayer and praise sometimes will erupt in tongues unknown by the speaker. We pray and praise the Lord with our whole hearts. While some "private" speaking in other tongues occurs in public gatherings, we have a Bible admonition to take care the "gift of tongues" is not misused. It is not proper to address people publicly in tongues unless there is to be an accompanying gift of interpretation. These activities take place in church meetings without forewarning. Be careful to stay quiet in your own heart, and listen for God. IN any group of people, there usually some who may be "out of the spirit". Misuse of the gifts does not negate the validity of spiritual phenomenon. For guidance, we rely upon the word of God, and though sometimes failing, continue in His way. You should not be embarrassed, or think that someone expects you to do what they do.

The life's of Apostolic people are not traditional, or "crazy", but are free expressions of people who are in love with a marvelous and gracious God who has revealed himself to them. Apostolic's experience freedom of emotions, and freedom from inhibition. When you get around people who want to worship, don't feel embarrassed or odd. Just "go with the flow"! We are having a good time, and we love you, and want you to feel the goodness of God.

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We have learned that "God inhabits the praises of His people", and aren't ashamed to invite His closeness. Well, that's just a brief rundown. There is so much more. I guess that you ought to be on the lookout for love, joy, peace, and cleanness. If you aren't looking for these, and are like most people, it's because you stopped. Also, look for a good time! You might be challenged, but will not be disappointed! Remember, Pentecost is not a religion, it is an experience!

Are Apostolics "protestant" or "Catholic"?

Actually ... neither.

The strict definition of Protestantism arrives from a medieval separation from the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical administration because of 'protest' (hence PROTESTant). Commonly, the separation of greatest focus is that of German Christendom in the 16th Century, the era which protestants refer to as "the reformation", and which the Roman Catholic council of Trent was convened to deal with. Other Protestants existed from time to time, such as the French Hugonots who suffered great persecution, and of course the famous schism under Henry VIII forming what is today, the Anglican communion. Before that, Waldensians date from the 12th century. Certainly many other offshoots of the Trinitarian religion of Rome have been forgotten by history. While much of the world today profits from a society where the morality and intellectual acuity of the reformers, an objective analysis of their beliefs finds that administrations differ, but much of the religion of Protestantism is common to Rome. Indeed, some Protestant scholars discriminate between Catholicism and Protestantism on the basis that Protestantism "accepts" the authority of the first five ecumenical councils, and not seven.

Catholicism on the other hand has many resemblances to the Apostolic faith. Both believe, for example, in the essentiality of water baptism, and in the receiving of the Holy Ghost in a particular event. Both Catholics and Apostolics practice laying on of hands, and believe strongly in the authority of the ministry (i.e. that God works through men by special dispensation). Both express most adamantly, the importance of being joined to the church, the one church of the Lord Jesus Christ, by means which are resident in that church alone to teach, to reproduce and to preach to the world. Both believe that the scriptures cannot be fully comprehended by the individual who does not have residing within him or her, the Spirit of God.

But, what makes a Catholic, a true Catholic? It is the subjection to a particular authority. Catholics by nature accept the authority of the catholic ecclesiastical rule, over that of the Apostles, and their scripture. Consequently, the Papal authority retains the sole right to interpret scripture and to charge the church, and the world with requirements as if by God Himself.

Thus, at the foundation of the different in authorities, we have two distinct forms of baptism.

In, or into to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ .

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost .

Associated with these separate forms are two radically different theological

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constructs concerning the identity of God:

One God, a Spirit who was incarnated in the flesh, in the nature of man.

One being (God) consisting internally of three distinct identities or persons, (i.e. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

The theological debate is beyond the scope of this page. To investigate the nature of God according to the scriptures.

Why have some called Apostolics a "cult"

To give a very brief, and insufficient answer, it is allow those who make the charge to define what they are not. To point to a people who preach, believe and baptize in the manner which the Apostles did, according to scripture, and say, "because of these reasons, this is a cult", is simply to say, "we have another way".

Firstly, the charge of "cultism" is typically unfair, as those who hear it are not treated to an explanation of what the person making the charge means by "cult".

Second, one good dictionary connotation of cult is: a people grouped together by common bond to a person or idea....though this definition is rarely applied.

Sadly, advocates of orthodoxy instead use various, eclectic definitions of "cult" which simply places all who don't hold to certain doctrinal criteria, or who are condemned as holding certain opinions, under the heading of "cult". Evangelicals argue over this list of criteria and we frequently see new lists, and revisions offered by personalities within the religious world.

We are, however, most concerned that our profession is measured by the divine measure, which is not the opinions of men, or an ecumenical agreement, but

the revelation of scripture. It is true that we do not hold the same theological definition of the godhead as some other Christian groups.

However, we do believe that Jesus Christ is divine and supreme in every respect, and that He is due all worship, and alone demonstrates God to the human race. This is the scriptural standard for agreement with the church. We do not violate that standard, but rather express it with all emphasis!

In practice we are also in very close agreement with most evangelical groups, except as regards water baptism. Even in the realm of the experience of the Holy Ghost, which classical Pentecostals alone abundantly and outrightly experienced in the first half of this century, we would not be rejected by evangelical standards, any more than their own "charismatic" elements. So, where is the beef?

Do you believe in World Peace and Global unity

Sure! However, my eyes are open, and looking around, I have not seen any reason to expect people to accomplish a complete change in human nature. From the Bible: From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members (i.e. from inbred characteristics)? - James 4:1

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When a person truly desires peace, and righteousness to reign, he looks first, not at the wide world, but at his own personal dominion. Can you truly control your own actions, and passions? Can you resist responding with your pride is hurt? Can you submit yourself to the rule of a sovereign God, and do His will, not your own? That's what real peace will take today. Thank God, He has sent His Spirit to enable us to be changed, and to actually do the seemingly impossible thing. Take the first step in surrendering to Jesus Christ, and he will accomplish the rest of the difference. And peace WILL reign in one more heart. And YOU will bring peace wherever you go! Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. - Mt 5:9

Political unity, power and strength will win a political kingdom and endear a person to the head of that power. Spiritual power and strength will deliver another, higher kingdom and with it, the kingdoms of this world will fall into order under the truth, and not an oppressive power of false authority, See, authority keeps rebellion at bay. But you need to remember, Almighty God came not as King, but as a Lamb! He is not reigning as King yet. But He will, and there is NOTHING WHATSOEVER anyone can do to help or hinder Him. We ought not to think of ourselves more high than we really are. Today, you and I can both do right. Let's do it, even in the midst of the struggle . The Holy Ghost is available to us so that we can be witnesses of Him and His power to a hungry world, where EVERY soul is desperately in need of peace! But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. - Mt 6:33

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What will happen to me, if I get into this?

Good things!

Will you experience joy? Yes

Will you experience peace? Yes

Will you undergo a major change in the way you think about life?

Well, do rich and poor people eat and dress differently? Yes, of course! To be a child of God means benefits, which are felt and effect your whole life. You ask Will you become a zombie? Why would you? Receiving understanding and strength gives you choices, it doesn't take them away ! Hinderances which you have known can be overcome in the strength and love of the Holy Ghost, but mostly these things don't happen automatically. If you are shy, and are born again, you'll still be shy ... but if you experience severe anxiety, you probably won't any more.

If you are inclined to be compulsive, you still will be, but you will find you have more self-control, if you want to use it . When a person receives the Holy Ghost and is baptized in Jesus' name, the experience a release from guilt as sins are removed. Many times chronic problems, such as chronic tension headaches, or stomach problems associated with anxiety disappear for good, though not always. Healings often occur at water baptism through the power of Jesus' name, though not always. The most commonly reported transformation is the experience of contentment . Do all your problems go away? Not on your life, but what a difference it makes walking with Jesus, and genuinely feeling the effects of His presence. We live in an era when more and more spiritual powers come to bear on average people. Having a righteous stand before God whose covenant ensures your care, and having the right to use His name is great benefit. Through prayer, the lies of deceiving spirits are defeated. Am I saying that YOU can have these blessings? Yes!`