



Richard Davidson: An Anniversary Meditation

PENTECOST 1998. TODAY I'M FULFILLING a dream I've had for years. I'm in Jerusalem, standing in the "Cenacle" on Mount Zion, probably located on the very site of the upper room where the disciples received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in A.D. 31.¹ A group of more than 100 Christians fills the upper room, vigorously singing praises to God.

Experiencing Pentecost in Jerusalem at the very site of Pentecost on the very day of Pentecost—I can hardly contain my enthusiasm! I think how the disciples gathered here for 10 days after Jesus' ascension, focusing attention on their risen Saviour. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the tangible sign to them that Jesus had indeed been inaugurated as priest-king in the heavenly sanctuary, that they had an Advocate in heaven ministering in their behalf.

Below the upper room where I'm standing is the traditional "tomb of David," and hundreds of my Jewish brothers and sisters are now crowded into the tomb area, poring over the Torah. All over Jerusalem and the rest of the world Jews stayed up all last night, the eve of Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost), studying Scripture in commemoration of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, which they believe took place at this time of year. I was fascinated to walk through the streets of the Hasidic Jewish community here in central Jerusalem last night about midnight and observe groups gathered almost everywhere—homes, schools, and synagogues—young and old vigorously and vocally reading or chanting the words of Scripture.

Now here at the upper room the sounds of Jews chanting Scripture and Christians singing of Jesus blend together. Old and new—Jewish fervor for Scripture and Christian fervor for Jesus—the two images merge in my mind as I sit down on a stair step of the Cenacle to contemplate . . .

The two images also have come together in a special way in my own experience in the last few months. I have begun to realize as never before that when all is said and done, what really matters is focusing on Jesus in the Scriptures.

Communion with Jesus through His Word, intimacy with Him through meditating on His life and work and character—this is foundational for a vibrant Christian life of peace and victory. I have found that my progress in the Christian way is directly proportionate to the time I spend in intimate communion with Jesus. I find myself more and more often taking seriously the inspired challenge of Ellen White: "Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible."²

I've experienced that God's promise is true! As I sit here in the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, I dedicate myself to spending more quality time meditating upon Jesus as He is revealed in Scripture. ■

¹ See Bargil Pixner, "Church of the Apostles Found on Mount Zion," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16, No. 3 (May/June 1990): 16-35, 60.

² Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 514.

Richard Davidson is chair of the Old Testament Department at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.