

As the World Turns

It was a bad day to wake up groggy. But sometimes we just need an awakening of gargantuan proportions. That morning, Feb. 9, 1971 my grand awakening came in the form of the Sylmar Quake.

It barely impressed me at the beginning. “Oh, another earthquake,” was my only thought. After all, we had experienced two foreshocks just during first semester, and I felt by then that I was an old hand at the peculiar Southern California custom of rattling around every now and again.

But then, it was supposed to stop. And it didn't. For some sixty eternal seconds the floor of my dorm rattled, shook, convulsed, and then finally—chunk, chunk, chunk—settled into silence.

Having the earth shake under your feet gets your attention! Perhaps that's why God shook the earth at Mt. Sinai when He gave Israel the Ten Commandments. In just a few short weeks, cataclysmic events had tossed them about in Egypt and spewed them upon the rocky desert. And now the mountain shook, thunder rolled, lightning crackled. God turned their entire universe upside down.

Even after experiencing the miracles of Passover, the giving of the Law shook them to the core. Terrified, they withdrew and told Moses, “You deal with Him!” (Ex. 20:19)

After much calculation, rabbinical tradition places this cataclysmic event on the ancient festival of *Shavuot*. *Shavuot* is known as the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament, but most Christians call it Pentecost.

Talk about cataclysmic events! Flames from heaven, people talking in foreign tongues, witnessing to beat the band—the first New Testament Pentecost was no less phenomenal than the Old Testament giving of the Law.

And to think they both happened on the same festival! The giving of the perfect Law of Love from the Creator God, and the giving of the very means of walking in the fullness of that Law.

What joy must have filled the hearts of the apostles and disciples gathered together in that upper room, celebrating the Feast of Firstfruits, waiting upon the Comforter Jesus said He would send, and then seeing the world turned upside down by another move of the hand of God.

Jesus never intended to do away with the Law. In Matt. 5:17 He said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

You see, turning our world upside down was all part of the plan. The Law and the Spirit—two parts of a whole, a beautiful gift—the mind of God!