#

# Bible Study – Second Sinai

## Introduction

Pentecost, also called Whitsunday or Whitsun, is a wonderful time of praise and celebration for the amazing gift that God has given to us. The Holy Spirit is the living presence of God with us, comforting us, guiding us, preserving us, and empowering us.

This Bible study helps us to understand in more detail what happened at Pentecost and what it means for us today. We will be using a couple of different Bible readings to reflect on the story of Pentecost and help to set it into the context of the biblical narrative. It can be used on your own or in a small group.

There will be a series of questions to help you think about the Bible stories. You do not need to answer all of them, or any of them! They are there to help guide your thoughts, reflections and prayers. They are not a quiz of your knowledge.

Most of all, let this Bible study be a prayerful time for you.

Pentecost Blessings!

## Bible Text

‘When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.’ (**Acts 2:1-4 NRSV**)

Pentecost was a Jewish feast that already existed before Christianity began. Pentecost (*Shauvot* in Hebrew) takes place seven weeks after Passover. At Passover God led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt. At Pentecost God gave them the Law at Mount Sinai and established the Jewish covenant.

Easter is celebrated at Passover. The giving of the Holy Spirit is celebrated at Pentecost. We will come back to this point!

## Questions

* Do you think it matters that when Pentecost came the disciples were all gathered together?
* Does the sound of rushing wind remind you of anything?
* The language of wind, or breath, is often used when referencing the Holy Spirit. Can you think of some examples? (*Consider the stories of creation or Elijah on the mountain.)*
* What does it suggest about the way the Church should welcome people, that when the Holy Spirit came everyone spoke other languages?
* Is there a link between this following story from Exodus when Moses receives the Law and when God gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples?

## Bible Text

‘Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.’ (**Exodus 24:15-17 NRSV**)

## Questions

* If God gave the Holy Spirit at the festival where people celebrated when God gave them the Law, does this suggest anything about how God might want us to understand the purpose of the Holy Spirit?
* Thinking about this devouring or consuming fire, what could that represent about how the Holy Spirit can affect us?
* What kind of attributes or characteristics does the Holy Spirit help to grow in us? (*Refer to Galatians 5:22-23 for some ideas.)*
* When you think about the Holy Spirit, what comes to your mind? How do you imagine it? What colours, images, noises or smells do you think about?
* When you think about the Holy Spirit, what do you feel?

#  Reflection

At Pentecost we celebrate the time when God gave the Holy Spirit to his followers. This was the moment when the Church began. The Holy Spirit joins us together in our relationship with God. This is what makes us a Church – not only that we gather in worship and love, but also that the Holy Spirit binds us together.

Just as the Law bound the Jewish people together and taught them how to faithfully follow God, so the Holy Spirit binds us together and teaches us how to follow God. The Holy Spirit grows good fruit within us, and a tree grows fruit not for itself but in order to spread its seeds and grow more trees. The fruits of the Holy Spirit grow in us not only so that we may be better disciples of God, but also so that others may come to know Jesus and grow that fruit in themselves as well.

Pentecost is all about transformation. When ordinary people like me and you are filled with the love of God through the Holy Spirit, we are able to help Jesus in changing this world for the better.

# A Pentecost Prayer

Holy Spirit, consuming fire and transforming power, come fill us again.

Holy Spirit, fullness of love and agent of grace, come fill us again.

Holy Spirit, bright light of a new day dawning, come fill us again.

Lord Jesus Christ, send us your Spirit again so that we may be changed again and again into your likeness. Let those dark recesses of our minds and hearts be cleansed through the fire of your Spirit so that no dark thought or desire remains. Renew and restore us, fill us with your power and might. Grant us the assurance of salvation through the indwelling of your Holy Spirit. Plant the seeds of holiness within us and, by your grace, help us to love like you do.

Send your Holy Spirit on to us and your Church again and again.

Amen.