**Week beginning 1st October 2023 SMALL GROUP NOTES**

Acts 2:1-21

‘Church begins: Multi-national & Spirit-empowered’

A variety of approaches for study & discussion you can choose from:

**Read Acts 2:1-13**

1 **What had the disciples already learnt from Jesus about the Holy Spirit**?

Assuming the disciples had remembered **Jesus’s teaching,**

see what they were taught in **John 14:15-17** and **John 16:7-15**.

2 **The sound of the ‘wind’ and the sight of ‘fire’** were two of the amazing aspects

of the coming of the Holy Spirit onto, and into, the disciples.

Can you think of the significance of these images in the Bible?

You could read some of Ezekiel’s vision of God: **Ezekiel 1:4 & 1:25-28**.

What other historical examples can you think of?

3 **For what purpose would the disciples be receiving the Holy Spirit?**

What did we already have clues about in **Acts 1:8** for what happened on that day?

**Read Acts 2:14-21**

4 **What is the explanation Peter gives** **for what has just taken place**

as he quotes from the Old Testament?

Should the disciples have been ready for this, & not surprised?

5 **Can you give examples of** **the presence of the Spirit in the Old Testament**?

You could read: **Genesis 1:1-2; 2 Samuel 23:1-4; Psalm 104:27-30**.

6 **What would be the New Testament difference about the ministry of the Spirit**

 compared to the experience for those living in Old Testament times?

Read **Ezekiel 36:25-28** where this difference was prophesied and spelled out!

7 **What practical steps can we take to be a church for ‘every nation under Heaven’?**

 List some of the opportunities we have to make this more of a reality.

**Prayer**

Pray for our church to be led & empowered by the Holy Spirit in every plan & activity.

Pray for guidance through every step towards appointing new leadership for our church.

Pray that Alpha may encourage guests to ‘call on the name of the Lord for salvation’.

If you would like to think more about how Pentecost was part of God’s revelation through the Bible & in the life of the Jewish people, here, and over the page is some encouragement.

8 **Discuss the term ‘Pentecost’ and what it meant to the Jewish people.**

 It came 50 days, or 7 weeks, after ‘Passover’, or as we call it, ‘Easter’

As we relate this to previous Jewish experience, here’s some background information.

**Exodus 23:14-16** helpfully summarises the three main feasts in the Jewish calendar.

A brief summary to clarify the confusing terminology of their history is over the page.

How did Pentecost fit into the historical experience

 of God’s people through the Bible?

**The 3 main feasts** of the Jewish year, & **the key Christian events** linked to them:

**The Festival of Unleavened Bread** Exodus 23:15

 Alternative name: **PASSOVER** Leviticus 23:5 – ‘The LORD’s Passover’

 Historic origin: **God’s rescue of his people from Egypt**

 New Testament fulfilment: **Redemption through the Cross of Christ**

**The Festival of Harvest** Exodus 23:16

 Alternative name: **FEAST OF WEEKS** Exodus 34:22

 or **PENTECOST** – a Greek origin term

 Historic origin: At first, another harvest festival

 but later remembering:

 **The giving of the Law at Sinai**

 New Testament fulfilment: **The gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church**

The Festival of **Ingathering** Exodus 23:16

 Alternative name: **FEAST OF BOOTHS** Leviticus 23:33

 or **Feast of Tabernacles or Tents**

 Historic origin: **The Desert experience of living in tents**

 New Testament fulfilment: **God coming to live ‘in tents’ with his people**

**I heard a loud voice from the throne say,**

**“See, the tent of God is among humans!**

**He will make his home with them,**

**and they will be his people.**

**God himself will be with them,**

**and he will be their God.**

Revelation 21:3