



Community Group Discussion Guide

Go Therefore: Acts 1:1-11 – January 10, 2021

I. Starter Questions:

- Have you been on a short-term mission trip, or maybe served long-term as a missionary outside the United States? In your experience, can you recall and describe a situation where you personally experienced, or saw, the ministry of Holy Spirit at work?
- It helps, in understanding and putting context and meaning to the book of Acts to hear the full “title” of the book—the “Acts of the Holy Spirit” (sometimes also referred to as the Acts of the Apostles”, recognizing it was the Holy Spirit acting through them). In your time of hearing the book of Acts taught, what acts of the Holy Spirit stood out to you, or had particular meaning to you, and why?

II. Background and Scripture:

Luke, also the writer of the gospel named for him, wrote the book of Acts. Luke tells us that in his first writing (the gospel of Luke), his intention was to tell us “all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up...” (Acts 1:1). It is helpful to lay side-by-side, Luke 24 and Acts 1, and listen as he takes us, at the end of Jesus’ ministry on earth, to the giving of the Holy Spirit for the continuation and empowerment to follow Jesus in His mission. The book of Acts has a number of major themes as Jesus hands off to His followers His mission. But He doesn’t leave them alone in their work. In the passage we’re looking at today, the major theme is the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise recorded by Luke in Luke 24:48-49, “You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Acts 1: 1-11 ¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, “Men of

Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

III. Discussion and Questions:

Verses 1-3: Written to Theophilus, one of the themes of the book of Acts is that it is apologetical. In reading verses 1-3, where do you see this theme? What do we mean when we refer to Christian apologetics?

Verses 4-5: These verses speak to the promise Jesus made to His followers, recorded in Luke 24—the promise to be “clothed with power from on high”. Verse 5 goes on to speak of this covering as being “baptized with the Holy Spirit”. What is the meaning of the word baptize (baptizo, in Greek)? What does it mean to be immersed in the Spirit? What part of our lives is not touched by the Holy Spirit if we are baptized, or enveloped in Him? If all of our lives are touched by this baptism, what are some of the implications for us as believers?

Verses 6-7: When Jesus had gathered His followers prior to His ascension, they again asked the question that Israel had asked for generation: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?” Jesus’ response is interesting: “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.”

Jesus had spent 40 days, between the resurrection and His ascension, instructing them for the mission ahead, yet their thoughts have again wandered. How would you describe Jesus’ response? Does the church today get distracted? What are some of those things that distract us from the gospel mission?

Verse 8 introduces the major theme of the book of Acts and points to why the book is often called the “Acts of the Holy Spirit”. Verse 8 reads, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...” How do the words “receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” inform our understanding of Jesus’ words of being “clothed” or “baptized” with the Holy Spirit?

Jesus told his followers that they would be sent on a Spirit-empowered mission. What was the mission Jesus called His followers to and why did they need to be Spirit-empowered? The following verses are helpful.

The work of regeneration: Ezek. 36:26-27 – “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Titus 3:5-6 – “...he [God] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,**⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior...”

Effectiveness in Mission: 1st Cor. 1:11 – “***But one and the same Spirit works all these things*** [spiritual gifts], distributing to each one individually just as He wills” (NASB).

In 1st Cor. 12:7, Paul called spiritual gifts “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit. When spiritual gifts are active, this is evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence. Have you thought of your spiritual gift as the activity of the Holy Spirit in your life? Have you thought of your spiritual gift as the powerful action of the Holy Spirit? What does this say about our “lack of ability” when it comes to being Christ’s witnesses?

Effectiveness in Prayer: Romans 8:26 – “We don’t know how to pray as we ought, ***but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.***” How does this encourage you in prayer?

Finishing Up: Are we quick to recognize our weaknesses, but slow to recognize the power that we are “clothed” with through the Holy Spirit? Paul didn’t immediately recognize his “thorn in the flesh” as a gift. He pleaded for deliverance, but Jesus said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

IV. Responding in Prayer:

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would remind us that we’re not alone in our weaknesses; that he works in our humility, through the Holy Spirit, to accomplish the mission Jesus has called us to.
- Thank God that He has fully equipped us, through His Spirit, for the mission we’re called to.
- Pray that God would encourage more of us, in the power of His Spirit, to respond to His call to go to the nations.