



Community Group Discussion Guide

Go Therefore: Acts 1:12-2:41 – January 17, 2021

I. Starter Questions:

1. When you work together with other people, what kind of role suits you best?
2. Briefly describe a time in your life where you had to have courage.

II. Discussion of Scripture:

Acts 1:12-26 NASB

[12] Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. [13] When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. [14] These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. [15] At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, [16] "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. [17] For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." [18] (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. [19] And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) [20] "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'Let ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'" [21] Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us- [22] beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us-one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." [23] So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. [24] And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen [25] to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." [26] And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Acts 2:1-41 NASB

[1] When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3] And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. [5] Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was

hearing them speak in his own language. [7] They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, [11] Cretans and Arabs-we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." [12] And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" [13] But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." [14] But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. [15] For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; [16] but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: [17] 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; [18] EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. [19] 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. [20] 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. [21] 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT everyone WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.' [22] "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know- [23] this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. [24] But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. [25] For David says of Him, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. [26] 'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; [27] BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO Hades, Nor ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. [28] 'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.' [29] "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30] And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, [31] he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. [32] This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. [33] Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. [34] For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, [35] UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'" [36] Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-this Jesus whom you crucified." [37] Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" [38] Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your

sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." [40] And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" [41] So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Brief Explanation:

Acts 1:12-26 Peter perceived the importance of asking God to identify Judas' successor in view of the ministry that Jesus had said the Twelve would have in the future. He led the disciples in obtaining the Lord Jesus' guidance in this important matter (vv. 21, 24). From his viewpoint, the Lord could have returned very soon to restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 6), so the Twelve had to be ready for their ministry of judging the twelve tribes of Israel when He did. The disciples returned to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. The apostles gave (devoted) "themselves to prayer", probably for the fulfillment of what Jesus had promised would take place shortly (Dan. 9:2-3; Luke 11:13). Luke stressed their unity ("all with one mind"), a mark of the early Christians that Luke noted frequently in Acts. The disciples were "one" in their purpose to carry out the will of their Lord. Divine promises should stimulate prayer, not lead to abandonment of it. In almost every chapter in Acts you find a reference to prayer, and the book makes it very clear that something happens when God's people pray. Prayer is foundational in decision making of any kind in the Christian life.

Undoubtedly, the key disciple in Luke's writings is Peter. He was the representative disciple, as well as the leading apostle. Peter said this Scripture "had" to be fulfilled. The understanding of Peter here is ... (1) that God is doing something necessarily involved in his divine plan; (2) that the disciples' lack of comprehension of God's plan is profound, especially with respect to Judas who 'was one of our number and shared in this ministry' yet also 'served as guide for those who arrested Jesus'; and (3) that an explicit way of understanding what has been going on under divine direction is through a Christian understanding of two psalms that speak of false companions and wicked men generally, and more specifically, Judas Iscariot. Peter's quotations are from Psalms 69:25 and 109:8. Why did Peter believe it was "necessary" to choose someone to take Judas' place? Evidently, he remembered Jesus' promise that the 12 disciples would sit on 12 thrones in the messianic kingdom, judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev. 21:14). To be as qualified for this ministry as the other 11 disciples, the twelfth had to have met the conditions Peter specified.

Acts 2:1-41 The Holy Spirit's descent on the day of Pentecost inaugurated a new dispensation in God's administration of humanity. Luke featured the record of the events of this day to explain the changes in God's dealings with humankind that followed in the early church and to the present day. This was the birthday of the church. Luke had introduced the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry with His baptism with the Spirit (Luke 3:21-22). He now paralleled that with the beginning of Jesus' heavenly ministry with the Spirit baptism of His disciples (Acts 2:1-4). The same Spirit who indwelt and empowered Jesus during His earthly ministry would now indwell and empower His believing disciples. John the Baptist had predicted this Pentecost

baptism with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16), as had Jesus (Acts 1:8). Jesus had already done the baptizing, and now the Spirit "came upon" the disciples.

The day of Pentecost was an annual spring feast at which the Jews presented the first-fruits of their wheat harvest to God (Exod. 34:22). The Jews also called Pentecost the Feast of Harvest and the Feast of Weeks in earlier times. They celebrated it at the end of seven weeks following the Feast of Passover. God received a new harvest *of believers*, Christians, on this day of Pentecost. "Fire," as well as wind, symbolized the presence of God (Gen. 15:17; Exod. 3:2-6; 13:21-22; 19:18; 24:17; 40:38; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). The believers received a visual as well as an audio indication that the promised Holy Spirit of God had come. Each one of these "flames" settled on a different believer present. God could hardly have depicted the distribution of His Spirit to every individual believer more clearly. The Spirit had in the past resided on the whole nation of Israel corporately, symbolized by the pillar of fire. Now He resided on each believer, as He had on Jesus. This fire was obviously not normal fire because it did not burn up what it touched (Exod. 3:2-6). Luke *always* connects the 'filling of the Holy Spirit' with the proclamation of the gospel in Acts (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9). Those who are 'full of the Holy Spirit' are *always* those who are faithfully fulfilling their anointed task as proclaimers of the Gospel (Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:52).

Peter's Pentecost sermon: Peter, again representing the apostles (1:15), addressed the assembled crowd. He probably gave this speech in the temple's outer courtyard (the court of the Gentiles). He probably spoke in the vernacular—in Aramaic or possibly in common Greek—rather than in tongues. Peter had previously denied that he knew Jesus, but now he was publicly representing Him. The apostle distinguished two types of Jews in his audience: native Jews living within the province of Judea, and all who were living in Jerusalem. In Peter's proclamation, Peter cited three proofs that Jesus was the Messiah: His miracles (v. 22), His resurrection (vv. 23-32), and His ascension (vv. 33-35); and verse 36 is his summary conclusion. Peter argued that God had attested to Jesus' Messiahship by performing miracles through Him. "Miracles" is the general word, which Peter defined further as "wonders" and "signs". Peter then pointed out that Jesus' crucifixion had been no accident but was part of God's eternal plan (3:18; 4:28; 13:29). Some of the Jews who had recently cried "Crucify Him" may very well have heard Peter's speech. Peter laid the guilt for Jesus' death at the Jews' feet (v. 36; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52; 10:39; 13:28) and on the Gentile Romans (4:27; Luke 23:24-25). Note Peter's reference to both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man in this verse. Lastly, God, a higher Judge, reversed the decision of Jesus' human judges by resurrecting Him. God released Jesus from the "pangs (finality) of death". A higher court in heaven overturned the decision of the lower courts on earth. It was impossible for Death to hold Jesus because He had committed no sins Himself. He had not personally earned the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23), but He voluntarily took upon Himself the sins of others. Peter next argued that David's words in Psalm 16 just quoted could not refer literally to David, since David had indeed died and his body had undergone corruption. Ancient tradition places the location of King David's tomb south of the old city of David, near the Pool of Siloam. David's words were a prophecy that referred to Messiah as well as a description of his own experience. God's oath to place one of David's descendants on his throne as Israel's king is in Psalm 132:11.

Peter then added a second evidence that Jesus was the Christ. He had proved that David had prophesied Messiah's resurrection (v. 27). Now he said that David also prophesied Messiah's ascension (Ps. 110:1). This was a passage from the Old Testament that Jesus had earlier applied to Himself (Matt. 22:43-44; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-42). It may have been Jesus' use of this passage that enabled His disciples to grasp the significance of His resurrection. It may also have served as the key to their understanding of these prophecies of Messiah in the Old Testament. David evidently meant that "the LORD" (Yahweh, God the Father) said the following to David's "my Lord" (Adonai, Master, evidently a reference to Messiah). Yahweh included a promise that He would subdue His vice-regent's enemies ("until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet"). Peter took this passage as a prophecy about David's greatest son, Messiah. Yahweh said to David's Lord: "Messiah, sit beside Me and rule for Me, and I will subdue Your enemies." This is something God the Father said to God the Son. Peter understood David's reference to his Lord as extending to Messiah, David's ultimate descendant.

Peter lastly wanted every Israelite to consider the evidence he had just presented, because it proved "for certain" that Jesus of Nazareth (cf. v. 22) was God's sovereign ruler (Lord) and anointed Messiah (Christ). It is clear from the context that by "Lord," Peter was speaking of Jesus as the Father's co-regent. He referred to the same "Lord" he had mentioned in verse 21. The beginning and ending of the main body of the speech emphasize the function of disclosure. Peter begins, 'Let this be known to you,' and concludes, 'Therefore, let the whole house of Israel know assuredly ...,' forming an inclusion (2:14, 36). In the context this is a new disclosure, for it is the first public proclamation of Jesus' resurrection and its significance. Acts 2:22-36 is a compact, carefully constructed argument leading to the conclusion in v. 36: 'God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.' Peter not only proclaims Jesus' authority but also reveals the intolerable situation of the audience, who share responsibility for Jesus' crucifixion. The Pentecost speech is part of a recognition scene, where, in the manner of tragedy, persons who have acted blindly against their own best interests suddenly recognize their error.

The Holy Spirit used Peter's sermon to bring conviction, as Jesus had predicted (John 16:8-11). He convicted Peter's hearers of the truth of what he said and of their guilt in rejecting Jesus. This conviction 'pierced their hearts' and notice the full meaning of their question in verse 37, "brethren, what shall we do?". These were Jews who had been waiting expectantly for the Messiah to appear. Peter had just explained convincingly that He had come, but the Jewish nation had rejected God's anointed King. Jesus had gone back to heaven. What would happen to the nation over which He was to rule? What were the Jews to do? Their question did not just reflect their personal dilemma but the fate of their nation. What should they do in view of this terrible situation nationally as well as personally?

Peter told them what to do. They needed to "repent." Repentance involves a change of mind and heart first, and secondarily a change of conduct. The context of repentance which brings eternal life, and that which Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, is a change of mind about Jesus Christ. Whereas the people who heard him on that day formerly thought of Him as mere man, they were asked to accept Him as Lord (Deity) and Christ (promised Messiah). To do this

would bring salvation. When people speak of "repentance," they may mean one of two different things. We use this English word in the sense of a conduct change (turning away from sinful practices). We also use it in the sense of a conceptual change (turning away from false ideas previously held). These two meanings also appear in Scripture. This has led to some confusion concerning what a person must do to obtain salvation. If a person just thinks of repentance as turning from sinful practices (reforming oneself), repentance becomes a good work that a person does. This kind of repentance is not necessary for salvation for two reasons. First, this is not how the gospel preachers in the New Testament used the word, as one can see from the meaning of the Greek word *metanoia*. Second, other Scriptures make it clear that good works, including turning from sin, have no part in justification (Eph. 2:8-9). God does not save us because of what we do for Him but because of what He has done for us in Christ. Repentance, by definition, is not an act separate from trusting Christ. It is part of the process of believing. As C.S. Lewis wrote, "repentance is not something God demands of you before He will take you back and which He could let you off if He chose; it is simply a description of what going back is like."

Discussion Questions:

1. Where did the ascension of Jesus take place?
2. How did the apostles show that they were following Jesus' orders?
3. What did the group of eleven apostles do when they got together? How does this apply to our lives today?
4. How did the apostles choose Judas's successor?
5. Recalling that Peter denied Jesus earlier, how do you think the disciples felt about Peter's leadership?
6. How do you make important decisions in your family?
7. Why is prayer important in our decision-making process?
8. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)
How did this experience differ from John 20:21-22 (See 1 Corinthians 12:1-3).
9. What common manifestation do we witness in the following accounts in scripture of people receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit?
10. What prompted Peter to stand up and address the crowd in Acts 2:14? Why do you think people listened instead of just having him arrested or walking away?
11. From Peter's sermon, what facts about Jesus would be key for non-believers to understand (29-33)?
12. What was the response of those who heard Peter's words?
13. What was Peter's answer to the question they asked in verse 37?
14. Describe repentance. What does it mean to repent?
15. How did Peter's sermon supply enough information for those listening to gain a full understanding to repent? Should our message be different today? Why or why not?
16. How many souls responded to the gospel Peter preached after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Compare this to the giving of the Ten Commandments? (Exodus 31:17-18, Exodus 32:1-2,7-8,25-29). Why might this be significant?
17. Based on this passage of Peter's Sermon, how might you summarize the message of

Jesus?

18. Who needs to hear the message of Jesus? Does a person who is a really “good” person need to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, or just those who are doing wrong? Discuss. In what ways can each of us reach those who need to hear the gospel message?

III. Responding in prayer:

Lord, you know each heart. Empower us with the Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim the gospel, just as Peter did, to a dark and chaotic world. Strengthen us to get us out of our comfort zone and share the message of Christ. Bless us with your presence each day, and may your grace pour over us. Your word is alive, and it is sharp, piercing us and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. May we live for your kingdom and show love to everyone. There is so much hurt and heartache, let us be a light to others, leading them to salvation only found in Jesus.