



# Brown Community Group

## Discussion Guide

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

### I. Starter Questions:

What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase “Baptism of the Holy Spirit? Do you see the supernatural indwelling of the Holy Spirit in any person’s life as a non-event or life changing? Would that person ever be the same? Have the same outlook? Make the same choices as before? Be perceived as weak or not having supreme ability from God?

### II. Scripture, Acts 1:12-26. Acts 2:1-41:

*<sup>12</sup> Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. <sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) <sup>16</sup> and said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup> He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.” .... “May another take his place of leadership.” <sup>21</sup> Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” <sup>23</sup> So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” <sup>26</sup> Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.*

#### Acts 2:1-41

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. <sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” <sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> “In*

*the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.<sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.<sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’<sup>22</sup> “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.<sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.<sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.<sup>25</sup> David said about him: “‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.<sup>26</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope,<sup>27</sup> because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay.<sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’<sup>29</sup> “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.<sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.<sup>31</sup> Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.<sup>32</sup> God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.<sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.<sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “‘Sit at my right hand<sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”<sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”<sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

### III. Scripture 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). The disciples returned to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit and gave (devoted) "themselves to prayer". Luke stressed their unity ("all with one mind"), a mark of the early Christians. The disciples were "one" in their purpose to carry out the will of their Lord. 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. The understanding of Peter 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 and (3) that Peter's quotations are from Psalms 69:25 and 109:8, where he remembered Jesus' promise that the 12 disciples would sit on 12 thrones in the messianic kingdom, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. 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). 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. 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. Those who are 'full of the Holy Spirit' are *always* those who are faithfully fulfilling their anointed task as proclaimers of the Gospel.

*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. 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". 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). 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. 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 was God's sovereign ruler and anointed Messiah. 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. 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.

Peter told them what to do. They needed to "repent." 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). 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."

#### **IV. Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Why did the Apostles return to Jerusalem? What were their expectations?
2. What was the first and primary thing they did once they returned? Discuss the situation and what the Disciples knew and did not know?
3. Now let's put ourselves in their position, what do we think they might have been praying for?
4. Peter was the clear leader of the disciples in these scriptures, but how do you think the others felt about him denying Christ 3 times?
5. Why is prayer important in our decision-making process?
6. What clues are given in Chapter 2:1-3 that show the coming of the Holy Spirit as a supernatural real occurrence?

7. Did the Holy Spirit's presence come upon only the 12 Apostles or all the group (120-300) of God's disciples? Is this the same occurrence as the "Pentecost Upper Room Experience"?
8. When it references "speaking in other tongues", did the apostles speak other known languages or ecstatic utterances? Were the apostles able to continue this amazing miracle?
9. Let's examine Peter's speech to the disciples introducing the Known and Unknown:
  - i. Jesus was of Nazareth, a historical person
  - ii. His works, wonders and signs were sufficient evidence of God's power working in Him
  - iii. Jesus' death was no accident, but a part of a designated plan
  - iv. God raised up Jesus, they must believe in the Resurrection
  - v. Authority for these events was the scriptures (OT)
  - vi. Proof of Jesus' Lordship
10. When people positively responded to Peter's sermon, what did he say they needed to do?
11. Did Peter's sermon provide ample information for a listener to gain a full understanding of repentance? Doing your necessary part to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?