

Week 2—Acts 1:9-2:13

Begin each day of your study by asking the LORD to speak to you through His Word.

Day 1

1. Read Acts 1:9-11. Before you read the box below, answer: what is the importance of Jesus' ascension? Why was it necessary?

Christ's Ascension—Justin Holcomb writes, “The ascension is Christ’s return to heaven from earth (Lk 25:50-51; John 14:2, 12, 16:5, 10; Eph 4:8-10; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:14, 7:26, 9:24). The incarnation does not cease with Christ’s ascension. Jesus lives, now and forever, as true man and true God to mediate between God and man (1 Tim 2:5). He will come again as He left, fully God and fully man (Acts 1:11). Jesus ascension is a crucial event in His ministry because it explicitly shows His continual humanity and the permanence of His resurrection. The ascension guarantees that Jesus will always represent humanity before the throne of God as the mediator, intercessor, and advocate for needy humans. Because of the ascension, we can be sure that Jesus’ unique resurrection leads the way for the everlasting resurrection of the redeemed. Jesus also ascended to prepare a place for His people (John 14:2-3) and to send the Holy Spirit to fulfill His ministry of witness and empowering (John 16:7), a development which, He said would be more advantageous for the church than if He had stayed on earth (John 14:12, 17).” (Holcomb, 2014)

2. Why does Jesus' ascension not get mentioned as much as His crucifixion and resurrection? *Should* it be mentioned more? If so, why in your opinion?

3. What conviction was going to sustain Jesus' disciples as they fulfilled their mission with Jesus being physically absent (see v. 11)? How can this still encourage us today? Does it encourage you? Why or why not?

Day 2

1. Read Acts 1:12-26. Why do you think prayer seemed to be the major activity that Jesus' followers engaged in after they returned to Jerusalem? Why didn't they just get right to work (see 1:8)? What does this suggest to you?
2. What was Peter's conclusion about Judas (vv.15-20)? Why was it "necessary" for the apostles to replace Judas (v. 21)? What were the qualifications of the person who would replace Judas? Why were these qualifications important?

"It is necessary"—Most believe the reason it was "necessary" to replace Judas was because the number 12 has a rich significance and importance in Scripture. For example, the 12 patriarchs headed the 12 tribes of Israel. Most likely then, just as the patriarchs were the heads of Israel (under God's rule), so now the 12 apostles were to be the heads of the church (under Jesus' rule & direction).

3. Why did the apostles "cast lots" (cf. Ex 28:30, Num 26:53, 1 Chron 26:13-16)? Why is this the last time this method is used to discern God's will? How do we discern God's will today?

Casting Lots—Casting lots was originally appointed by God when He ordained the office of priest. Decisions that required Yahweh's guidance would be made by the high priest, who would cast the lots (known as the Urim & Thummim) that sat inside the high priest's breastplate, right over his heart.

Day 3

1. Read Acts 2:1-3. These verses describe the presence of the Spirit as a mighty wind and fire. Considering passages like Exodus 13, Ezekiel 1, and Matthew 3:11, what is the significance of the Spirit appearing and being described this way?

Pentecost—Pentecost is the fiftieth day after the Passover week. *Pentecost* is the Greek word for what the Jews refer to as the Feast of Weeks (see Leviticus 23:15-21; Deut 16:9-12), the Feast of Harvest (see Ex 23:16), or the Day of Firstfruits (see Numbers 28:26-31). On Pentecost, the Jews brought offerings of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest to the temple to thank the LORD for it. This was also the day when the Jews celebrated the giving of the covenant under the Law of Moses.

2. Read the note above. Why was it fitting that the events of Acts 2 occurred on Pentecost?

3. Do you think we should celebrate the Day of Pentecost still today as believers like we do Easter or Christmas? Why or why not?

Day 4

1. Read Acts 2:4. In your understanding, what does it mean to “be filled with the Holy Spirit?”

2. How do you know if you are filled with the Spirit (read the verses below and respond)?

Romans 8:9-10—

Ephesians 1:13-14—

3. How should being Spirit-filled affect what you do (read the verses below and respond)?

Acts 1:8—

Romans 8:5-8—

1 Corinthians 12:12-26—

2 Corinthians 3:17-4:12—

Galatians 5:16-26—

Day 5

1. Read Acts 2:4-13. What was the “sign” the disciples received when they were filled with the Holy Spirit? What “other tongues” did the Holy Spirit enable the disciples to speak? Why would this be the “sign” the Spirit gave to the disciples this day?

2. *Before* reading the note below, write what you know and any questions you have about speaking in tongues.

Tongues—There is a lot of debate within the Christian faith about what is exactly meant by “speaking in tongues.” In Acts 2 it is certainly speaking of human languages of the various nations, but in 1 Corinthians 12-14 Paul seems to be referring to a non-human language (angelic/heavenly), that is given to *some* believers as a spiritual gift (not *all* however, as 1 Corinthians 12:30 clearly shows). Regardless, discussions about speaking in tongues must not sidetrack us from the significance of what happened on the Day of Pentecost. It symbolized a new unity in the Spirit transcending racial, national and linguistic barriers.

3. Read Genesis 11:1-8. How does what happens on Pentecost take on even more meaning in light of the Tower of Babel story (see note above)? What might this mean for you personally?

4. Why were some of the Jews “utterly amazed” (vv. 7, 12)? Why did some of them think they were drunk (v. 13)? How are these two responses still similar to what a follower of Jesus might experience today? Does that encourage or discourage you?

Conclusion

1. What most stood out to you as you studied Acts 1:9-2:13 this week? *Why* do you think this was the case?

2. What is the Holy Spirit prompting you to *do* as a result of this? Be prepared to share with your group!