



Week One: Acts 1:1-11

Jesus' Ascension

Study Guide for the week of
January 9, 2022

Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. If you could take a trip somewhere far away, where would you go?
2. What task did Jesus assign the apostles? ([1:8](#))
3. Who were the figures in white? ([1:10](#))
4. How did the men in white encourage the apostles? ([1:11](#))
5. What is the importance of Jesus' final promise and command to you?
6. What specific means (abilities, opportunities, relationships) has God given you to carry out the task of being His witness?
7. What steps can you take to be actively involved in telling others about Christ?

Going deeper: More questions for discussion and reflection:

1. What does the ascension change about how you relate to your brothers and sisters in the faith?
2. What does Jesus being our eternal king mean for your thought life?
3. How does the authority and rule of Jesus interact with your fears?
4. How should you proclaim this Jesus if he is Lord of all and our only hope?

Life Application Bible Notes - Acts 1:1-11

Chapter 1

1:1 In the book of Acts, Luke continues the story he began in his Gospel, covering the 30 years after Jesus was taken up into heaven. During that short time the church was established, and the Good News of salvation was spread throughout the world, even to the capital of the Roman Empire. Those preaching the Good News, though ordinary people with human frailties and limitations, were empowered by the Holy Spirit to take it all over the world. In the book of Acts we learn about the nature of the church and how we, like these early believers, can turn our world upside down ([17:6](#)).

[1:1ff](#) [Verses 1-11](#) are the bridge between the events recorded in the Gospels and the events marking the beginning of the church. Jesus spent 40 days teaching his disciples, and they were drastically changed. Before the Resurrection, they had argued with each other and had deserted their Lord. One of them (Peter) even lied about knowing Jesus. Here, in a series of meetings with the living, resurrected Christ, the disciples had many questions answered. They became convinced of the Resurrection, learned about the Kingdom of God, and discovered their power source—the Holy Spirit. By reading the Bible, we can sit with the resurrected Christ in his school of discipleship. By believing in him, we can receive his power through the Holy Spirit to be new people. By joining with other Christians, we can take part in doing his work on earth.

[1:1-3](#) Luke says that the disciples were eyewitnesses to all that had happened to Jesus Christ—his life before his crucifixion, and the 40 days after his resurrection as he taught them more about the Kingdom of God. Today people still doubt Jesus' resurrection. But Jesus appeared to the disciples on many occasions after his resurrection, proving that he was alive. Consider the change the Resurrection made in the disciples' lives. At Jesus' death, they had scattered, disillusioned, and fearing for their lives. After seeing the resurrected Christ, they became fearless and risked everything to spread the Good News about him around the world. They faced imprisonment, beatings, rejection, and martyrdom, yet they never compromised their mission. These men would not have risked—and in some cases, given—their lives for something they knew was a fraud. They knew Jesus was alive, and the early church was fired with their enthusiasm to tell others. We need to know this so we can have confidence in their testimony. Twenty centuries later we can still be confident that our faith is based on fact.

[1:3](#) Jesus explained that his coming inaugurated the Kingdom of God. When he returned to heaven, God's Kingdom would remain in the hearts of all believers through the presence of the Holy Spirit. But the Kingdom of God will not be fully realized until Jesus Christ returns to judge all people and remove all evil from the world. Until that time believers are to work to spread God's Kingdom across the world. The book of Acts records how this work was begun. What the early church started, we must continue.

[1:4, 5](#) The *Trinity* is a description of the unique relationship of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If Jesus had stayed on earth, his physical presence would have limited the spread of the Good News because physically he could be in only one place at a time. After Christ was taken up into heaven, he would be spiritually present everywhere through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent so that God would be with and within his followers after Christ returned to heaven. The Spirit would comfort them, guide them to know his truth, remind them of Jesus' words, give them the right words to say, and fill them with power (see [John 14-16](#)).

[1:5](#) At Pentecost ([2:1-4](#)) the Holy Spirit was made available to all who believed in Jesus. We receive the Holy Spirit (are baptized with him) when we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. The baptism of the Holy Spirit must be understood in the light of his total work in Christians.

- (1) The Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience. We cannot be Christians without his Spirit ([Romans 8:9](#)); we cannot be joined to Christ without his Spirit ([1 Corinthians 6:17](#)); we cannot be adopted as his children without his Spirit ([Romans 8:14-17](#); [Galatians 4:6, 7](#)); we cannot be in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Spirit ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)).
- (2) The Spirit is the power of our new lives. He begins a lifelong process of change making us more like Christ ([Galatians 3:3](#); [Philippians 1:6](#)). When we receive Christ by faith, we begin an

immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in us to help us become like Christ.

(3) The Spirit unites the Christian community in Christ ([Ephesians 2:19-22](#)). The Holy Spirit can be experienced by all, and he works through all ([1 Corinthians 12:11](#); [Ephesians 4:4](#)).

1:6 During the years of Jesus' ministry on earth, the disciples continually wondered about his Kingdom. When would it come? What would be their role? In the traditional view, the Messiah would be an earthly conqueror who would free Israel from Rome. But the Kingdom Jesus spoke about was, first of all, a *spiritual* Kingdom established in the hearts and lives of believers ([Luke 17:21](#)). God's presence and power dwell in believers in the person of the Holy Spirit.

1:6, 7 Like other Jews, the disciples chafed under their Roman rulers. They wanted Jesus to free Israel from Roman power and then become their king. Jesus replied that God the Father sets the timetable for all events—worldwide, national, and personal. If you want changes in your life that God hasn't yet made, don't become impatient. Instead, trust God's timetable.

1:8 The "power" believers receive from the Holy Spirit includes courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority. The disciples would need all these gifts to fulfill their mission. If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

1:8 Jesus had instructed his disciples to witness to people of all nations about him ([Matthew 28:19, 20](#)). But they were told to wait first for the Holy Spirit ([Luke 24:49](#)). God has important work for you to do for him, but you must do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. We often like to get on with the job, even if it means running ahead of God. But waiting is sometimes part of God's plan. Are you waiting and listening for God's complete instructions, or are you running ahead of his plans? We need God's timing and power to be truly effective.

1:8 This verse describes a series of ever-widening circles. The Good News was to spread, geographically, from Jerusalem, into Judea and Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth. It would begin with the devout Jews in Jerusalem and Samaria, spread to the mixed race in Samaria, and, finally, be offered to Gentiles all over the world. God's Good News has not reached its final destination if someone in your family, your workplace, your school, or your community hasn't heard the Good News about Jesus Christ. Make sure that you are contributing in some way to the ever-widening circle of God's loving message.

1:9-11 After 40 days with his disciples ([1:3](#)), Jesus returned to heaven. It was important for the disciples to see Jesus taken up into heaven; they knew without a doubt that he was God and that his home was in heaven. The two white-robed men were angels who proclaimed to the disciples that one day Jesus would return in the same way he had gone—bodily and visibly. History is not haphazard or cyclical; it is moving toward a specific point—the return of Jesus to judge and rule over the earth. We should be ready for his sudden return ([1 Thessalonians 5:2](#)), not by standing around "staring into heaven," but by working hard to share the Good News so that others will be able to share in God's great blessings.

Acts Study Guide questions and notes are from