

The Bible 20/20 Week 41: "The Promised Land" (10-18-20)

Reading this week: Acts 1-14

Introduction: Read the opening of Acts (Luke's 2nd Book)

Acts 1:1-8 (ESV)

(1) In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, (2) until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. (3) He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. (4) And 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; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (6) So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. (8) But 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."

1) The Promised Land

Acts 1:3 (ESV)

(Jesus) presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and **speaking about the kingdom of God.**

Note: Jesus spent 40 days speaking on God's Kingdom - He is establishing them & giving instruction.

Acts 1:6 (ESV)

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, **will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**"

Note: They understood he was speaking about a dramatic shift, they still didn't understand how.

Remember in verse 4-5 He told them wait for the promised Holy Spirit, He's coming very soon . . .

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But **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."

Note: The Holy Spirit is going to play an essential role of empowering you to advance the kingdom

Promised Land . . . Remember the Birth of a Nation:

- Freed from Slavery in Egypt - Travel through the parting Red Sea
- Wilderness - an intentional time to receive the Book of Instruction
- Canaan - they were meant to cross the Jordan River and take new territory
- Lost an entire generation to wilderness wandering, because they didn't advance

How many Christians receive freedom (salvation) in Christ, receive instruction on following Him, but stop short of taking new territory?

The power of God is available to bring victory in our lives, & to advance God's Kingdom in this world.

And the Holy Spirit is an essential part of this process . . .

2) The Connected Life

In **John chapter 15** Jesus lays out the importance of living a life connected to Him . . .

*This is Jesus last moments with the people he knew best and loved the most before he is betrayed and killed.

John 15:4-5 (ESV)

(4) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (5) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Note: Apart from Jesus what can we do?

John 15:10-11, 17 (ESV)

(10) If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (11) These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full . . . (17) These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Note: Surrender, Stay Connected, His Joy becomes My Joy – and it fills me up! He is saying all of this to teach us how to love each other

- Jesus is saying it is essential to stay connected to Him in order to live the life he intended for us!
- So, then what does he do? Naturally he leaves them!

This makes no sense unless we realize that Jesus actually bookends this talk on abiding in Him by talking about the Holy Spirit . . .

John 14:15-17 (ESV)

(15) "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (16) And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, (17) even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Note: Once again surrendered to & connected with God, this time the Holy Spirit

John 16:7 (ESV)

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Note: Jesus says its actually working to our advantage that He leave so we can experience the person & power of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

We see this in action in the life of the early church . . .

Acts 9:31 (ESV)

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied

Note: The Kingdom is growing and advancing, just as Jesus described!

A.W. Tozer – “The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.”

3) Receiving the Holy Spirit

I have to decide that I want to receive the Holy Spirit's authoritative presence in my life . . . but that feels risky!

Joshua 3 - The new generation steps into their destiny, but first they have to step into the River . . .

- Moses led the people through on dry ground After! they saw the Red Sea part
- Joshua had the priests & leaders step into the river first with the presence of God, & then the way opened!

Acts 2 - God's people (120) gathered, waited, & prayed, just as Jesus instructed . . .

Acts 2:1-4 (ESV)

(1) When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Note: This scene then spills out onto the street, and all the people gathered for the feast hear this . . .

Acts 2:12-13 (ESV)

(12) And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (13) But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

Note: Don't allow yourself to be intimidated by the risks, or be put off by the weirdness of others!

Step into the River! Don't settle for a life time of wandering in the wilderness, let's experience all Jesus has to offer us in His Kingdom!

Conclusion: How to Receive the Holy Spirit . . .

- a) Receive the Holy Spirit at salvation as a deposit (or guarantee)

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

(13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Notes: Holy Spirit is our Assurance! He is the Guarantee of Inheritance (Jesus the Son has shared it with us!)

- b) Be baptized in the Holy Spirit – immersed in Him, surrendered to Him, filled with His power

Acts 1:4-5, 8 (ESV)

(4) . . . wait for the promise of the Father, which, (Jesus) said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." . . . (8) "But 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."

Notes: Baptism means immersion. Dead to myself, & alive to His spirit. Brings with Him power.

c) Re-filled regularly along the way – think of being the branches connected to the vine

Acts 4:8 – “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them . . .”

Acts 13:9 – “But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him . . .”

Ephesians 5:18 – “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit”

Receiving the Holy Spirit: Ask . . . Wait . . . Receive & Surrender!

Let's Pray!

Discussion Questions:

- Have each member of your group (if they are comfortable) share their journey and experience with the Holy Spirit. (sample questions to get them talking: Who do you think He is? How has he been present in your life? Are there still some things you feel unclear about him?)
- Have you received the Holy Spirit? In the 3 different examples given today, which (if any) have you experienced? (see notes for guidance: received the HS at salvation, baptized in the HS, re-filled by the HS)
- Describe when you first felt the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. How did your life change? How could you allow Him to have more power or control in your life?
- Close by spending sometime praying for and with each other, inviting the Holy Spirit to come into our lives as our leader and guide.