

## Acts Series #1

### “What To Do In The Meantime”—Acts 1:4-11

#### I. INTRODUCTION

#### TURN TO ACTS 1

##### A. *Waiting*

1. Does anyone here like to *wait*?
2. Anyone here like lines at the store
3. Or how about bumper to bumper traffic on the 101 Freeway?
4. Several years ago I remember hearing a comedian talk about the worst place in their world to be—on hold
  - a. at the time he mentioned it, didn't really bother me too much
  - b. hadn't ever really had to sit on hold for too long
  - c. but now that I've had to call some computer software tech support lines I know what he means
5. It turns out, I am not a good waiter
  - a. what really bugs me is when they are doing road work and have closed down all the lanes to just one
  - b. and while most people start to merge over early to make a smoother transition
  - c. some guys see the open lane ahead and shoot past all the polite people and try to jump in at the last possible moment,
  - d. causing the person they cut in front of to hit their brakes and jam everyone else up
  - e. so what I do is - I take it on myself to be the unofficial traffic break person
  - f. I split the lanes and drive so that I'm in both lanes and force all the zoomers to merge earlier
  - g. I did this recently one morning going north on Victoria Ave.
  - h. but one guy, rather than merging, decided to go around me
  - i. the only way for him to do it was to drive up on the median, which he did
  - j. plowed right through the landscaping to get around me
  - k. as he went by I looked over and gave him a really hard look
  - l. but he didn't even do me the honor of looking back—
  - m. he just sailed by, dropped back into the lane, and then cut in at the front of the line
  - n. I sat there thinking how all the problems of the world were the result of people like him; selfish, reckless
  - o. but only two days later—there I was sailing along down another road
  - p. the traffic began to slow so I changed lanes and rolled along till I realized I had just done what I hated so much
  - q. my lane was closed due to road work and I had just tried to cut into the front of the line

- r. I'm not good at waiting
- 6. Most people aren't

### **B. Waiting For Jesus**

- 1. But you know what—there is one thing all Christian are waiting for
- 2. The Return of our Lord & Savior
- 3. It's hard to wait for Him
- 4. We want so badly to see Him
- 5. And we want Him to come and set this world right
- 6. The bible has a lot to say about what we're to do while we wait

## **II. TEXT**

### **A. Vs. 4-5**

**{4} And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;**

**{5} "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

- 1. This takes place after Jesus has risen from the dead
- 2. He appeared to His followers over a period of 40 days and spoke to them about the kingdom of God
- 3. The three years of training He has had with them comes to an end with this passage
- 4. And these are His final instructions
- 5. Here once again, as we see so often in the book of Acts, the disciples were *all together*
  - a. these first believers loved getting together
  - b. their sense of community and commitment to each other is one of their identifying traits
  - c. and it's an amazing thing when you stop to realize that these first disciples were very different
  - d. sure they shared a common culture and language but that is about as far as the similarities went
  - e. these first disciples were from very different backgrounds and groups
  - f. but despite their obvious differences, there was something bigger that held them all together
  - g. that something bigger was their mutual love and devotion to Christ
  - h. if it hadn't been for Jesus, these men never would have come together
  - i. but because of Jesus, they would never be driven apart
- 6. And so it is for us!
- 7. One of the marks of someone who has been truly born again is a desire for the fellowship of other believers
- 8. And one of the signs of a healthy church is fellowship among the people that crosses the man-made boundaries of race, background, and social status

9. Jesus told them to stay at Jerusalem and wait for something that He had already spoken to them about—The Promise of The Father
10. John records for us in chs. 14 & 15 of his gospel how the night before His death, Jesus had told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and indwell them after He was gone
  - a. He told them the Holy Spirit would continue in them the work He had begun
  - b. the Spirit would recall to their memory the things He had taught them
  - c. He would empower them and enable them to live lives of faithful devotion and serve to God
11. Now here in Acts 1:4 He tells them that in just a few days that promise would be fulfilled

### **B. Vs. 6-8**

**{6} Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”**

1. It’s not really too hard to understand why the disciples would ask this question
2. Bear in mind that the popular idea of the Messiah was that He would come in the clouds of heaven with great majesty and power
3. He would come to the people of Israel as their King and would set up the righteous Kingdom of God on earth
4. The main reason why the people of Jesus’ day rejected Him was because He didn’t fit their ideas of the way the Messiah would come
5. But these men had spent over three years with Jesus and were now utterly convinced He was the Messiah, the Christ
  - a. they had seen Him the sick, raise the dead
  - b. walk on water, multiply food
  - c. and perform all manner of signs and wonders
  - d. most importantly, they had seen Him conquer death itself by rising from the dead
  - e. the last 40 days had been spent filling in the gaps in their understanding of Jesus and His mission as the Savior
6. In their thinking, there is only one thing left for Him to do:
7. Establish the Kingdom of God on earth
8. So they ask Him
9. You see, they were prompted to ask this question by His telling them that the Holy Spirit would now come and cover their lives
10. As good students of the OT, they knew many of the passages which speak of the coming of the Holy Spirit also speak of the glorious coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God<sup>[1]</sup>

**{7} And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.**

11. They had asked the “when” of the coming of the Kingdom
12. But Jesus gives them a straightforward warning that God’s timetable is

- none of their concern
13. Boy, this is a lesson we all need to learn isn't it?
  14. It seems we all want to pull aside the mystery of God's timing and discover on what date He has ordered the events of our lives
  15. Greatest of all the dates we long to know is the date when He comes again
  16. But to this innate desire our Lord speaks a sober word of warning
  17. "That's none of your business!"
  18. "What is your business is this . . ."

**{8} "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

19. V. 18 begins with the Greek word *alla* and introduces a sharp contrast with what has just gone before
20. In other words, it is none of their business when Jesus comes again, but what *is* their business is this . . .
21. The Holy Spirit will come upon them and they shall become witnesses to Him
22. It becomes quite clear from a careful study of the Scriptures that what Jesus is referring to here is something different from being born again
23. Remember when we were studying the gospel of John we saw how after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to them and breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."
24. They did, as was evidenced by the fact that their minds and hearts were opened and they finally understood the scriptures about Christ
25. What Jesus says here is 40 days after that!
26. Here in Acts 1 they are already born again
27. But Jesus says they will have a new experience with the Holy Spirit—a baptism or immersion in the Holy Spirit
28. Earlier, in speaking to them about the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them that He was *with* them but would be *in* them
  - a. before Christ died and rose again, the Holy Spirit was *with* them in the person of Jesus
  - b. but after the resurrection, when Jesus breathed on them, the Holy Spirit *indwelt* them
  - c. now here, Jesus says the Holy Spirit will be *upon* them
29. And the result will be that they will receive power
30. The Greek word for power is *dunamis*
  - a. dynamic power
  - b. power that has a definite effect on things around it
  - c. in fact, we get the word *dynamite* from it
31. John the Baptist foretold this when he said, "I baptize with water, but He who comes after me will baptize you with the Spirit and with fire."
32. This power would make witnesses of them
33. It would empower them to fulfill the monumental task before them
34. You see, Jesus had commanded them to take His message to the ends of the earth and to make disciples of all people

35. This was a task well beyond their strength or ability
36. But they were so excited, they may have mistakenly thought they could do it by themselves
37. After all, they were fired up—they had just spent 40 days with the Lord of Creation
38. They had just witnessed Jesus conquer death
39. An event like that can be pretty motivating
40. But still, the task of world evangelization could not be accomplished through their own excitement and strength
41. Friends, never forget that God doesn't want us to labor for Him in the power of our own strength
42. Where God guides, He provides
43. The strength to live the Christian life and carry the gospel message comes from Him
44. It comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit
45. When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we are empowered to be witnesses to Christ
46. You know, there is a lot of talk today about empowerment
  - a. 9 times out of 10 it usually means someone wants more money from some government agency
  - b. parents are being taught how to empower their kids
  - c. employers are encouraged to empower their employees
  - d. and on and on it goes
47. As Christians, we don't look for our empowering to come from an agency or any man—we look to the Holy Spirit who empowers us to be witnesses of Christ
48. In the last part of v. 8, Jesus gives a specific framework for living out this witness which we'll be taking a careful look at on Wednesday evening

### **C. Vs. 9-11**

**{9} Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.**

**{10} And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,**

**{11} who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."**

1. I find these verses almost comical, except for the fact that if I was there, I'd likely have done exactly what the disciples did
2. I'd be standing there with my eyes gazing up into the clouds, long after the last vestige of Jesus had left
3. When I was a boy of 6 or 7, living in the suburbs of Chicago, I was with a friend, playing in a large field
  - a. we went there every day after school to hunt for snakes

- b. one day, as we were walking through the tall weeds, a huge bird took off from just in front of us
  - c. scared us to death!
  - d. it was the first time either one of us had ever seen a bird like that; later found out it was a falcon
  - e. we watched it as it flew around in circles over the field, ever higher and higher until it was just a tiny little dot in the sky
  - f. we must have stood there gazing up at that bird for a good 10 minutes till it was clean out of sight
  - g. and the whole time we just oohed and ahhed
4. I wonder if the disciples oohed and ahhed
  5. I wonder what kind of look was on their faces
  6. What they didn't notice was that while they watched Jesus ascend, two others joined them
  7. It's clear from the way they are described that they were angels
  8. And no doubt they followed the stare of the disciples
  9. Remember doing that in high school? Get a few people together and stare and point into the sky? Others will pass by and stop and join them, or take a quick peek to see if there is anything there
  10. These angels do that, but as soon as the last sight of Jesus disappears into the clouds, they turn to the disciples and say, in effect, "Well what are you standing here for?"
  11. "When He comes back, He'll come the same way."
  12. The way Jesus left, is the way most people expected Him to come
  13. And now these angels tell them that when He comes again, He will come just as they have seen Him go
  14. When Jesus comes again, He comes
    - a. bodily
    - b. in the glory of the clouds
    - c. attended by angels
    - d. to the Mount of Olives
  15. But in the meantime, the disciples are not to stand around with their spiritual hands in their togas
  16. They are to be busy with the task that Jesus has set before them
  17. And that was to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit so that they could be witnesses to him from their homes, to the end of the earth

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. Like Them**

1. Though nearly 2000 years separate us from those first disciples, we find ourselves in the same place
2. We, like they, are waiting for Christ to return
3. And we, like they, need to hear the word of the angels
4. We don't wait for Him by standing with our mouths hanging open, searching the skies for any trace of His coming
5. What we do in the meantime is live as witnesses of Him before a lost and

- hopeless world
6. We carry on His mission and His message through the empowering of the Holy Spirit
  7. The only difference is that we don't have to wait in Jerusalem
  8. Just 10 days after Jesus spoke these words and ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled them with power
  9. The rest of the book of Acts is the story of how they were witnesses of Him in Jer., Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the world

### ***B. In The Meantime***

1. Here's what you can do while you wait for Jesus
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit, and live for Him!
3. Live for Him right here and now
4. And pray about your part in living for Him in some other place
  - a. like Northern California
  - b. or back east somewhere
  - c. or Ireland, or Manadero
  - d. or Russia, or Albania

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[1] Isa 32:15-20 44:3-5 Eze 39:28-29 Joel 2:28-3:1 Zech 12:8-10