

## Acts 1:1-11

### *Introduction To Acts & Our Mission While Waiting*

#### **Introduction to Acts**

Acts was written between 63 and 70 A.D. by Luke. He addresses the book to the same person as the Gospel of Luke, Theophilus. "Theophilus" literally means "Friend of God," or "Love of God," which leads some theologians to believe it's a term referring to all Christians. It's also possible that he was a real individual. Acts records the events of the early church starting right after Jesus' ascension. It follows the disciples, mainly Peter and Paul, as they go through the phases of spreading the Word. Acts provides a history of the growth of the early church through persecution, hardship and trials.

#### **Acts 1:1-11 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." <sup>6</sup> Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." <sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

**?** Luke's reference to his "first book" in verse one connects the Gospel of Luke with the Book of Acts. What significance is there in viewing these two books as an unbroken history?

**?** Why was it important for Jesus to prove that He was alive, and how does that reality affect the future ministry and mission of the disciples?

**The Great Commission in the Four Gospels**  
**Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)** 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Mark 16:15 (NIV)** He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

**Luke 24:46-49 (NIV)** 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

**John 20:21 (NIV)** Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

? What does Jesus command the disciples to do, and what does He promise them?

? The disciples ask Jesus about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. His answer in verses 7 and 8 show the greater aspirations Jesus has for them, namely receiving the Holy Spirit and spreading the Gospel. What distracts us from recognizing the greater aspirations Jesus has for us?

? In verse 11, two angels appear and speak about Christ's return. Do you think the angels' words to the disciples are encouraging or discouraging, and how do their words motivate the disciples?

? In each of the Gospels Jesus gives the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-49 and John 20:21). In light of Acts 1:8, what is the heart of Jesus, and what are main themes found in the overall mission He gave the disciples?

? As we wait for the return of Christ, what does it mean to be His witness?

? Jesus calls us, as He did the disciples, to be His witnesses to "the ends of the earth" (vs. 8). We may tend to think of this as only global missions, but how can we reframe our thinking to see the great commission in those around us?

**For Discussion And Accountability**

**?** What is distracting you from God's mission?

**?** In what way is God calling you to be a witness for Him?