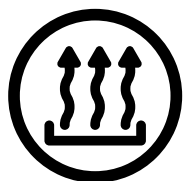




# ACTS: THE STORY CONTINUES



## WARM-UP

What is something you are waiting for, even though you don't know when it will happen?

OR

What is something you have waiting for and was it brought about how you expected?

*Pray for your time together as a group.*

*Read out loud as a group*

## INTRO TO ACTS

"Luke begins the Book of Acts where he left off in his gospel. Acts records the initial fulfillment of the great commission of Matthew 28:19-20 as it traces the beginning and growth of the New Testament church. Christ's last words before His ascension were so perfectly realized in the Book of Acts that they effectively and concisely outline its contents: "You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem (chs. 1-7), and in all Judea and Samaria (chs. 8-12), and to the end of the earth (chs. 13-28)" (1:8). Thus, Acts traces the rapid expansion of the gospel, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading throughout the Roman Empire." (Talk Thru the Bible by Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, pg 351)

## ACTS 1:1-11 (NIV)

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 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. 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. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "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."



Why is it important theologically that Jesus is alive?

*Possible Answers: It showcases that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient and accepted by God, that sin and death itself was defeated, that God is powerful, and that there is hope that this is not the end; that we too have a promised resurrection yet to come.*



How does the reality that Jesus has risen affect the future ministry and mission of the disciples?

*Possible Answers: The reality of the resurrection was the culmination of their entire message about who Jesus is. It was crucial for the disciples to be witness to the resurrection as fuel for their ministry and as the key to all the amazing claims they would make.*



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?

*Possible Answers: interest in our own affairs, nationalism, prejudices, allowing our life to be overflowing with distractions, being focused on our own glory/power; wanting Jesus to fulfill our plans, rather than allowing Him to shape/mold us to be obedient to His plans, etc.*

*Break into 4 separate groups, read one of the following verses, and answer the question below. After 5 minutes, come back and discuss your thoughts together.*



What themes does this account highlight about the Great Commission?  
What do these themes reveal about the heart of Jesus?

*Possible Answers: Jesus is primarily concerned about people knowing Him as Lord. He is sending them, they are to be His witnesses and to go and make disciples, preach the Gospel, and that the Holy Spirit will empower them and Jesus will be with them. Jesus loves people and doesn't want them to be condemned.*

### **MATTHEW 28:16-20 (NIV)**

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 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 16:15-16 (NIV)**

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

### **LUKE 24:46-49 (NIV)**

He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. 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 20:21-22 (NIV)**

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."



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

*Possible Answers: Jesus calls us to speak and to share about what we have seen and experienced. We should be actively participating in the mission of Jesus by sharing with others the ways He has changed our life and how we have experienced Him. We can also do this by how we show love and kindness to those around us in our everyday lives.*

# DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- What is distracting you from God's mission?
- In what way is God calling you to be a witness for Him?