

## The Next 40 Days – Week 7 – Acts 1:1-11 – Jesus Sends Out His Disciples and Ascends to Heaven

**Acts 1:1-11:** *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.”*

INTRO to series “The Next 40 Days” – After He walked out of the grave on that first Easter Sunday, Jesus spent the next 40 days teaching and preparing His followers for what was coming next. As each day passed, the power of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church drew nearer. Though many were struggling with fear, failure, and doubts, Jesus cut through their confusion as light breaks into darkness. Jesus also gave some of His most important teaching during this time, including the “great commissions”—and then He ascended to heaven.

INTRO to **Acts 1:1-11:** The Book of **Acts** is a continuation of the Gospel of **Luke**, written to the same person—Theophilus. **Acts 1** begins with a final record of some of the events and words of Jesus during the 40-day period after His resurrection and before He ascended into heaven. The last moments of the disciples with Jesus before His ascension took place on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem.

### **I. From the beginning to the end of His ministry on Earth, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God. (vs. 1-3)**

-These first verses are a reminder of the many times Jesus appeared to the men and women who had been His disciples during this 40-day period, referenced many times in Scripture as evidence of the Living Hope of the resurrection.

-As we see throughout all the Gospels, **Acts 1:3** records that Jesus continued to speak about the **Kingdom of God** as His main message to His followers—so that they might see that everything in their lives and ministry was meant to come under the rule, sovereignty, and direction of God through their relationship with Jesus.

-God's Kingdom, as we read in **Daniel 7**, is ruled by Jesus Christ Himself who has been given all authority, glory, and power over every nation, tribe and tongue. His Kingdom is forever and it will never be destroyed or pass away.

## **II. Jesus reminded His disciples continually about the greatest gift of God to the Church in this age—the Holy Spirit. (vs. 4-5)**

-Jesus commanded the “eleven” disciples remaining to stay in Jerusalem until they received the promised gift from the Father—the greatest gift God has given to us in this age we call the “Church Age.” This Gift is the person of the Holy Spirit: *For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*” (vs. 5)

-Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would not just come to them, or even upon them, but they would be immersed fully in the power of the Spirit.

-The Holy Spirit is a fulfillment of Christ's promise from Matthew – “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Until Christ returns, every follower of Jesus can be confident that the Holy Spirit leads us, guides us, speaks to us, and FILLS us!

## **III. Jesus commissioned His disciples once again to be sent people saying, “You will be my witnesses...” (vs. 6-8)**

-The disciples misunderstood the Spirit as being only for restoring the Kingdom of Israel, which was more about earthly power than God's eternal glory.

-Jesus instructed His disciples not to worry about the times or dates the Father but rather to be SENT out in the power of the Holy Spirit to be Christ's witnesses until His return.

-Through the authority (Matthew 28:18) and power of God, the disciples would bear witness to the Good News of Christ and His salvation in “*Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*” (vs. 8).

-This was the final of Christ's commissions to the disciples during the next 40 days after Easter as recorded in all four **Gospels** and **Acts** (see below).

\*\*\*The mission chord is struck throughout these 40 days, and its sustain rings vibrantly throughout the entire book.

#### **IV. Jesus ascended to heaven with the promise that He will one day return again! (vs. 9-11)**

-After Jesus ascended to heaven, the angels commanded His first followers to stop looking up and start looking outward to their gospel mission to others. **vs. 10** begins with the disciples and other early Christians all standing around and looking at the sky.

-If this had been a movie, this would've seemed like a good ending. In the Book of Acts, however, this moment was not an ending, it was a beginning. This was not a death nor was it the final resurrection – this was the birth of the church.

-We are His Church, His Body in this world today, and we have much work left to do until our Savior and King returns. And when that day comes, may Jesus find us busy serving and sharing His Good News faithfully. He is the true hope for all humanity!

\*\*\*Disciples are sent out always and everywhere – in our neighborhoods and among the nations; around the world and across the street!

#### **Other Scriptures Referenced:**

**Daniel 7:13-14:** *“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”*

**-The “great commission texts” in chronological order as they happened during “The Next 40 Days” after Easter:**

#1 – **John 20:21:** *“As the Father has sent me, I also send you.”*

-On the first Easter Sunday – in the Upper Room

#2 – **Mark 16:15:** *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”*

-Galilee at table together with the disciples

#3 – **Luke 25:47-48:** *“repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”*

-After Emmaus, in Bethany, with his Disciples

#4 – **Matthew 28:19-20:** *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.*

-On a mountain in Galilee

#5 – **Acts 1:8:** *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

-On the Mount of Olives near Bethany just outside of Jerusalem

**Mark 16:19-20:** *So the Lord Jesus, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs.*