

Waiting For The Promise



“He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4)

Acts 1:4-8

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

Wait...

- Frustrated by this directive?
- Activists/men of action
 - “Let us make here three tabernacles” (Matt 17:4)
 - “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” (John 11:16)
 - “And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.” (Luke 22:50)



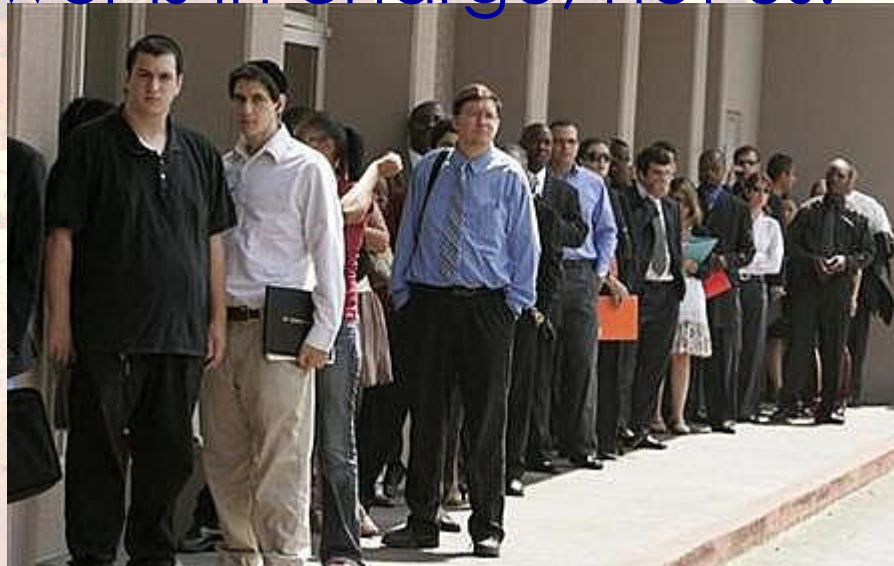
Wait? Why?

- *“Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”*
- *Wrong direction*
 - A political and military kingdom
- *Break free of their limited view*
- *Witness beyond limited expectation: Israel*
 - *Do not depart from Jerusalem (Church)*
 - *Until... baptized with the Holy Spirit (Power)*
 - *Witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*
 - Structured ministry
 - Home, extended family, rivals, all the world



We are not good at waiting

- We don't like waiting!
 - Waiting on lines, for lights, for our children to come home, at the doctor's office, for the war to end.
 - Waiting line in Hell
- Why is waiting so frustrating?
- Because it means someone else or some other power is in charge, not us.



Why Must the Disciples Wait?

- Small, fearful community that has no power on its own
 - “...the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19)
- St. Peter's witness before the Power:
 - “Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!”” (Mark 14:71)



- St. Peter's witness after the Power:
 - “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;²⁴ whom God raised up...” (Acts 2)

Why Must the Disciples Wait?

- Have a tendency to get Jesus' message all wrong.
 - “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” (Luke 22:49)
- Engage in ways that are not of the Lord
 - “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” (Luke 9:54)
- They flee when things get tough:
 - “...And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.” (Mark 14:51-52)



Hold Your Horses

- Restrain ourselves and wait for God's promise to be fulfilled.
- Fulfillment will come at God's timing, not our own.
 - Every prayer is answered, sometimes the answer is 'wait'!



We are

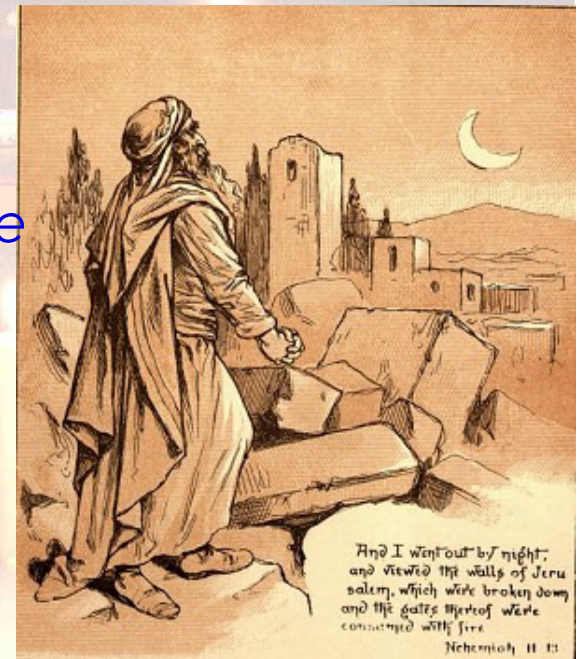
Action-oriented

- We have our projects and plans
 - We want to get on with things.
 - How does God figure into them?
 - Do we know? Have we asked?
 - Do we wait for an answer, some direction?
- Prayer: request and response
 - Telephone call
 - *“Lord, You know that I do not know what is good for me, and now that I am about to start, let it be according to Your will. If You see it fit, grant me Your blessing to complete it, if not, remove this desire from my heart.” (Prayer For God's Guidance Before Making A Decision - Agpya)*



“Hurry up and wait.”

- "Don't just do something, stand there!"
- Moses: instructed 40 years in the desert
- Nehemiah:
 - 4 months before his prayer was answered – to do God's work!
 - 3 days before he even told anyone why he was in Jerusalem:
 - “So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem;” (Neh 2:11-12)
 - Observe, inspect, figure out what needs to be done...



Restart at the Beginning

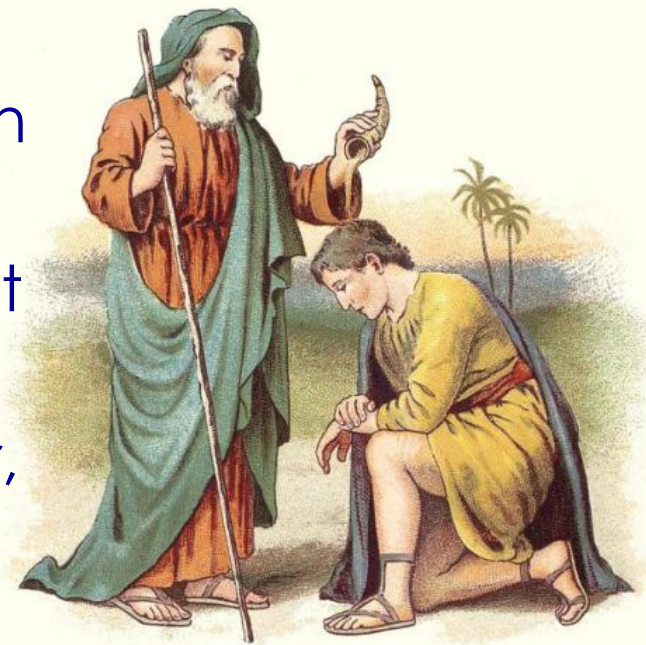
- Disciples of Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34)
- Misunderstood the whole mission of Christ!
 - *“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”*
- Jesus has to restart all over again with them
 - *“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*
 - Imagine a bishop/patriarch that needs to be re-instructed from the beginning!

Waiting on the Lord

- Daniel waited 3 weeks to understand God's message:
 - *"In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. (Dan 10:2-4)*
- Waiting on God patiently is very hard.
 - It requires faith and trust that God has a timing for everything and that He appears in silence for a very important reasons.

Why does God make us wait?

- Give us a blessing
 - Hannah waited on God to open her womb for years.
 - Finally, He gave her the greatest prophet and anointer of kings
 - If Samuel had been born earlier, perhaps he would have been a 'no-body'.
 - *"Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called upon His name; They called upon the LORD, and He answered them." (Ps 99:6)*



Why does God make us wait?

- Teach us to submit to His will
 - The children of Israel lived in Egypt for 400 years
 - God waited until they were ready to submit
 - When Moses told them to cross the Red Sea, they submitted without question.
 - *“Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today... So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea” (Exo 14:13-22)*



Why does God make us wait?

- Help us grow in virtue
 - Job thought of himself pure and righteous
 - God wanted him to understand there is no man pure and righteous in the sight of the Lord.
 - He allowed Satan to test him so he can open his eye about his mistakes and lead him to repentance.
 - *"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:5-6).



Why does God make us wait?

- Increase our prayer time with Him
- Every prayer is answered:
 - *"Then he said to me, 'Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; I have come because of your words.'" (Daniel 10:12).*
- Although Daniel waited three weeks until he got his answer, God had already accepted his request.
 - God reveals His answer to our request in His perfect time in order to allow us to gain more blessings and increase our endurance.

Waiting on the Lord

- “He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4)
- The Lord commanded His holy Apostles to wait
 - They were not ready for the mission
 - They were weak, fearful
 - They needed support and power from God
 - They had a short-sighted vision
 - They needed re-instruction
- We also must learn to wait
 - Listen to God’s response to our request
 - Gain His support
 - Inspect and understand the mission before us

Why does God make us wait?

- Give us a blessing
- Teach us to submit to His will
- Help us grow in virtue
- Increase our prayer time with Him

