

# Acts 1:1-11

by Welcome Detweiler

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*The sermon explores the significance of Acts 1:1-11, focusing on Jesus' final instructions to the apostles, the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the trait of human nature: curiosity.*

**Duration:** 39:18

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:36-44, Acts 1:6-9

**Topics:** "Second Coming", "Christian Hope"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by leading the congregation in a song about being ready for Jesus' return. He then reflects on the contrasting emotions experienced by the disciples after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The preacher highlights the joy and worship that filled the disciples as they returned to Jerusalem. He also mentions a conversation with a visitor who claimed that Jesus would return in 1988, emphasizing the importance of being prepared for Christ's second coming.

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## Transcript

...much to be thankful for, and we praise Thee for the gift of Thy Son and all that He means to us. We thank Thee for the joy that He has brought into the world, and we thank Thee for all who have already learned of His saving grace and keeping power. And we thank Thee for the blessing that He has brought to the entire universe, and we praise Thee for all that He has done for us as individuals.

We thank Thee, too, that He has supplied our daily needs, and we thank Thee for each one of us that have been blessed with health and strength, and were able to attend the services. And we pray Thy blessing on those who are less fortunate, who are now in the hospitals, and we pray Thy blessing on each one of them. Some of them in the rest homes, who also are not able to get out of bed, and we pray, Our Father, Thou wilt bless them with Thy presence.

Think of some in their homes who are not able to get out, and we pray, Our Father, Thou wilt bless them where they are, and grant to them the refreshing of Thy word as they listen to programs that exalt our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the confidence we have in Thee, and know that Thou canst hear our prayers and answer these that have pain and suffering, and we ask, Our Father, Thou wilt relieve them of all of these things that are so unpleasant to human nature. We ask, Our Father, now, Thou wilt help us to forget about the things that have occupied our attention during the past week, and also remove from our minds some of the plans that seem to come into our minds regarding the future.

We pray, Our Father, that Thou wilt bless us with Thy presence, and as we open Thy word, we pray that it may still be the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believeth. We pray, Our Father, Thy blessing on Thy word and all that is accomplished in the few moments that we are together. We pray that Christ may be honored and glorified, and that Christ may be magnified in each individual heart.

We give Thee our thanks and ask these petitions in the name of our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Reading from Acts chapter 1, The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandment unto the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. And God will add his blessing to the public reading of his precious word. I suppose it may be appropriate occasionally to remind ourselves that the chapters and the verses in our Bible are not a part of divine inspiration, but were put there by men for our convenience.

Have you any idea what it would be like to live in Old Testament days when there were no Bibles, but people probably had to use scrolls, and that would be tremendous to carry scrolls around. Many of them perhaps didn't own the Holy Scriptures, but rather went to the temple or to the synagogue and listened to whoever was in charge to read the Holy Scriptures. They had to depend on their memory.

What did he read this morning? And that perhaps caused some confusion because one said, I think he read this. No, he didn't. He read this.

However, isn't it wonderful that we have in such a compact book all that God has revealed to us? How wonderful. And I need to suggest to you that even the titles of the books are also not a part of inspiration, but rather put there for our convenience so we can find the place in just a few seconds where the preacher is going to turn to. I would take a guess that most of the books bear the names of individuals, and some of them, as in the New Testament at least, to cities where a message was sent.

However, there are a few who are a bit different, and perhaps caused a little concern by the men who gathered to give a title to the book. For instance, in the Old Testament, the book of Proverbs. That's not a man's name.

The book of the Psalms, and books like that, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations. And I think in the New Testament, perhaps, the book of the Acts may have caused a bit of discussion before they landed on that

title. Our Bible says the Acts of the Apostles.

Is that a correct title for the book? Or would it be better to say, Some of the Acts of the Apostles? Well, we remember when our Lord Jesus Christ was here, and while John is ministering the word, he mentions, and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. Again, in the last chapter, the last verse in John's Gospel. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

Amen. So, truly, the book of the Acts could not possibly contain all the Acts of the Apostles, because it is still an unfinished book. And perhaps it would be better to say, Some of the Acts of the Apostles.

Then there might be some who would say, Well, it also could be said, The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. That seems to be an improvement of the title. I looked for a definition that covers the book, and the title of the suggestion that was made by a man was, The book of the continual doings and teachings of the living Christ by the Holy Spirit through his body, which is the Church.

Now, that covers it in 23 words. But each time if I were to ask you to turn to the book and read that long title, you'd say, Couldn't they find a shorter title? I suppose if I had been there, I might have suggested, Why don't you call it The Second Book of Luke? Because in John's Gospel we have the Gospel, and then you have some letters that were written. And in 1 Peter and 2 Peter you have two books.

And we are sure that this was written by Dr. Luke, and he, first of all, has the Gospel that bears his name. So any of these titles might have been appropriate. However, it's a very interesting book, and I guess I have mentioned on a number of occasions that it's a book that bears the title of The Acts because there's plenty of action in that book, and a delightful book to read.

First of all, let's think of Luke starting out by saying that the former treatise, which means the book that he wrote, and in that book he tells us about what Jesus began to do and to teach. And I suppose the saddest part of the first book of Luke is in chapter 23 and reading from verse 48. This is at the crucifixion.

And all the people that came together to that site, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned. And all his acquaintance and the women who followed him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things. Luke, you never painted a darker picture than that picture.

Our hopes are all dashed to pieces. We're finished. We have to go home and acknowledge defeat.

The one whom we expected to be our Redeemer and our King hangs on a cross, lifeless. We never expected that, but there he is. However, Luke also gives us some bright pictures regarding the beginning of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And perhaps the closing verses of Luke's gospel presents that as well. And it came to pass, or rather verse 52, and they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. What a contrast.

Here is the high watermark in the book of Luke regarding the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. What makes the difference? The resurrection of Jesus Christ. If his death was the low point in their emotional feelings, then his resurrection three days later must have been the high point.

And generations of Christians have been rejoicing ever since that time and also have had these two emotions. When we turn to the Savior and think of what he went through when he hung there as bearing our sins, we are touched emotionally because of all that he had to bear because of our sins. But we don't walk around and pity the Lord Jesus.

We thank him that following the sequel to that story is he arose triumphantly and he is seated in God's presence today. The resurrection of Jesus Christ causes happiness over the whole wide world. Suppose he had not risen from the dead, then we would have had no salvation, no assurance of ever being in heaven.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is extremely important and Dr. Luke underscores that. He is seen 40 days after his resurrection. I wonder why he stayed.

The work was completed, he rose from the dead, he's ready to go, mission completed. Ah, but he knew there would be scoffers coming later in time and Peter writes about that in 2 Peter 3. Scoffers, where is the sign of his coming? Or are you sure that he died and that he arose from the dead? Because of that, I want plenty of proof. And in 1 Corinthians 15, we are told that he was seen of certain people and then adds, and over 500 people at once.

So there's plenty of evidence that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave. There are still many people today who occupy pulpits who do not believe that. Jesus rose in spirit and he lives in the hearts of people in spirit but couldn't have lived or rose from the dead bodily.

The Christian church is built upon this fact. Jesus Christ has no place to worship him in a tomb anywhere in the world. He ascended up into heaven.

But Luke says, there's more to follow. I told you about what Jesus began to do and to teach. Now I want to tell you what he continued to do and to teach.

Or, in those 40 days, he gave them some last minute instructions. He tells them here, I want you to remain in Jerusalem until some great event takes place. And he mentions that event.

And he says, I want you to stay there until that great event takes place. I suppose one of the things that happened when our Lord Jesus was here, it says he began to do and to teach. We think of his teaching ministry probably being from a platform and whether he had microphones or anything like that, but at least he was teaching them.

However, when you read about that, you will find that most of his teaching was in an informal way. Groups of people around him. He would make certain statements and make a pause and they would interrupt and ask him questions.

And that's how they learned a great deal. Perhaps that would be good again. Maybe you would learn more if you had the opportunity of raising questions while the man is trying to preach the sermon.

However, this is the first question that we find in the book of the Acts. In verse 6, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? That question was unnecessary if they remembered what our Lord Jesus Christ said when he was here. You remember in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 24, there are a number of times when our Lord Jesus Christ tells them about a secret that he has.

In verse 36, But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Verse 42, Watch therefore, watch therefore, for ye know not that what hour your Lord doth come. Verse 44, Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

Here is something that our Lord Jesus Christ kept as a secret, and he endorses that in verse 7, And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. There is a trait in human nature that wants to know what is not supposed to be known. I suppose that children sometimes receive a Christmas present which is shipped by mail, and when it comes to the house, do not open till Christmas.

And I think I can include adults also. When you get a package like that, if no one's around, you pick it up and shake it. Hmm.

No. Yeah, no. No.

I wonder if it could be unsealed and sealed back again without anybody knowing. My curiosity is eating me up. I want to know.

I want to know something that has been presented to me, and I'm not supposed to know it till a certain time. I wouldn't be a bit surprised. A bit of that was in the minds of the disciples when they said, Is this the time? Well, let me read it.

Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of God? He hath told them many times. This is a secret that he keeps, and no one will ever know this before him. However, let me think for a moment perhaps the blessing that comes to mankind because of that curiosity.

I don't suppose that we would ever have airplanes flying unless there were some men in North Carolina, Wilbur and Orville, who decided, I don't see why men can't fly. I think they were at one time considered by many people the craziest people on earth. Why didn't the Lord put feathers on us? Why didn't he give us wings? The very fact that he didn't, he doesn't want us to fly through the air.

But curiosity made them think, Maybe we can do it. And they did. And today it's no longer crazy people that fly.

It's something very common. And to go to the moon, impossible. However, the human mind is so anxious to know what is beyond.

I think there are plans made now, at least in the thinking of the mind, we want to go to Mars sometime. It'll take us a long time. We may not get there in our lifetime, but we want to go and find out what's there.

Again, I say, the difference between animals and men, the gap is widened continually. Apes don't do that. They just go from one place to the other, but they could care little about curiosity.

But man has been given this trait. This was brought to my attention just a few weeks ago, a few months ago, while I was in Colorado Springs for a week of gospel meetings. On the Thursday night, a visitor whom I hadn't seen before met me in the foyer after the service and said, isn't it interesting that we have in our Bible that Jesus Christ is coming again in 1988? So I said, that's interesting.

Tell me more about it. And he started to explain how he knew that Jesus Christ was coming back in 1988. Here's his theory.

Do you remember what happened on May the 14th, 1948? And I said, yes, that's when the nation of Israel was reborn. He said, you will also know that in your Bible, when God deals with the nation of Israel, he gives them a period of 40 years. 40 years.

And then he said, that's enough. You've been on trial long enough. And he said, when you add 1948 and 40 years, you come up with 1988.

And Jesus Christ is going to finish his testing of the children of Israel in 1988. Well, I was a little thrilled. It was a nice thought.

However, I said, then I have been wrong in looking for Christ during 1987. We're still in 87. And he said, well, no, I don't think so.

I think the general things are all right. I'm not saying that he will come on May the 14th, 1988. But at least we have this to build on, that he is coming back in 1988.

I think perhaps the man built on a theory that is not probably viable in the Bible. I suppose in the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, we have the story, the interesting story, of the feeding of the 5,000. And it says that the Lord said to Philip, what can we do to feed these people? He knew already what he was going to do, but he was testing him.

And he said, 200 penny worth of bread is not sufficient. He turned to Andrew. And Andrew said, we don't have anything but five barley loaves and two fishes.

Now, I suppose that Mr. Colorado Springs, I didn't get his name. I didn't bother remembering it. But at least we'll call him Colorado Springs.

If he had been there, I know what he's going to do. The Bible tells us. He's going to send manna from heaven.

That's his standard way of doing things. He can feed 5,000 people. He'll just drop manna from heaven.

Or, he might have said, he will repeat what he did to Elijah. He will send ravens to feed him. But he can't have anything new.

He will never bless loaves and fishes. He has to use what we have in the Bible. That man eventually will have to learn that God is not limited to what he did before.

He very often does something entirely new to remind us that he is not at his wits' end and doesn't have to use means that he used before. But it caused me to think. Supposing this man is spreading it all over Colorado and maybe there are some others who will follow him.

Does that mean that Jesus Christ cannot come in 1988? We read in Martin's Gospel, in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. So, we can conclude, one thing's sure. He will not come in 1988.

Now, does that sound right? No. He may come. It's possible that he will come.

And it is possible that he will come on May the 14th, 1988. But I don't want you to build on it. The coming of Jesus Christ is a very interesting subject and is very close to our hearts.

If I were to ask you, and I don't think I will, but if I should ask you, will you raise your hand and tell me, would you like the Lord Jesus to come within the next one minute? Would you like him to come? I think probably a lot of hands would go up. I'd like him to come. Or if I said, I want you to go home and think about that for 30 minutes and then answer God whether you would really like him to come.

I find that when people are extremely anxious for the Lord to come, usually when you ask them, why do you want him to come right away, very often they want relief from pain. And I can understand that. I know of arthritis patients who probably have pain continually and they've learned that in their new bodies they will not be allowed to have any arthritis.

It will be difficult for them to adjust to heaven. I too will say, I want relief because I'm taking cobalt treatment. I would love to have relief from it.

I want him to come back again. Another one will say, I have other problems. I just lost my job.

I have no income. I didn't expect that. And this is happening in our wonderful day.

The American Eagle just closed up one morning without any warning. And a lot of people were out of work. And a number of places have done that too.

And people say, I just don't know what I'm going to do. I've got bills coming in and I can't pay them. I have no idea what I'll do.

I wish the Lord would come again. That would save me from all of my problems. There may be still others who say, I've just gone through a severe disappointment.

I have problems and the disappointments have overwhelmed me. My best way out is, Lord Jesus, come right away. Then we will be free from all of these things.

I wonder if we are justified in turning to these things as we want him to come simply because we want relief. Escape, exit. We want to escape from problems.

I have no idea how many problems are registered in the hearts of my audience this morning. But I'm reasonably sure that a number of you have real or extraordinary heavy problems that you are facing. And you turn occasionally to the fact if Jesus Christ would come again, it would relieve me of all these problems.

I do have to remind you in those 30 minutes that you were debating whether you wanted to come today or not, you would also reflect upon some of the disadvantages of his coming again. You have been praying for someone to be saved, maybe a relative, maybe a friend. And you have earnestly prayed for that person.

I want to see them saved. And when you think of the coming of Jesus Christ, you will also remember when he comes again, the door will be shut and anyone who has heard the gospel in this age of grace will not be able to enter, will not be able to believe, will be doomed forever. And that sheds some light upon why we should not be too over-anxious for the Lord to come.

Isn't it rather nice that we can register this, that God can't make any mistake? There are a number of things that God can't do. He can't lie. He can't deny himself.

He can't make any mistake. He has fixed a date and it can't be any better date. So isn't it delightful that we can leave it in the Lord's hands and say, He will come at the right moment.

What about these problems that we have? I would like to suggest again that we keep in mind that God allows us to have problems for some definite reason. In many cases, it may be to develop us and mature us as Christians. None of us can say, I have learned all of God's lessons.

All of us have to say, I am still in the learning stage. And when difficulty comes, we may say, I wonder if God is sending this in order that I might learn something that I have never learned before. I've been depending upon my income and everything went smooth and now He wants me to trust Him completely.

I haven't learned that yet. But He is bringing me to that. And I have seen spiritual enrichment as a result of difficult problems.

And I think the Lord wants us to assess our problems and to look upon them as possible blessings in disguise to teach us that we haven't learned all of our lessons yet. And give us the privilege of turning to Him and simply expecting from Him the answers to all of our problems. It's nice to see the Lord answer prayer and to take care of these details down here.

And eventually He probably will lead us and guide us in all of these decisions that have to be made. Remember this, that when we beg the Lord to come and we are liable to do that at times, we are probably not willing to trust Him completely. If He would come earlier than He has set the date, then there must be some reason why He hasn't.

And He simply is going to keep that a secret. And no one needs to know. However, in Matthew's Gospel we have this, Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

You may remember that in giving my testimony I mentioned that perhaps the one thing that brought me to a decision of Jesus Christ was sermons on the second coming. I didn't fear death. I was too young to die.

I didn't fear anything that could happen in but the fact that Jesus Christ might come and leave me behind with no opportunity of ever being saved. That bothered me. And I got around it pretty well.

I kept thinking upon His coming again every moment of the day if I could and that will keep Him from coming. But, how do you do that when you're sleeping? So, I still had the problem. Such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

And I want to remind every unsaved person again Jesus Christ might come back in 1988 in spite of Mr. Colorado Springs. He is coming again and when He does you will be left behind. I think that it's time for us to realize the seriousness of the Word of God.

How could a person get to the place where he would say it doesn't bother me I know I'm unsaved but I've got plenty of company there's plenty around that are just the same folks. Then you don't believe God. You don't believe that when He should come again you would be left behind and never have the opportunity of being saved.

Some of you may say as some have told me I'm glad you told me how to be saved now I know what to do when the emergency comes. I have a verse for you in 1 Thessalonians that says that He will send strong delusions that you will believe a lie. In other words when Jesus Christ comes back again you will not have

the mental capacity to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Some of you may have been counting on that. Now I know how to be saved as soon as I hear He's coming again Lord Jesus I want to trust you as my Savior. You'll never do it.

Never do it. You will not be able to do it. How wonderful of God's matchless grace extending to whosoever will bad people, good people in between people you can be saved until Jesus Christ comes back again.

It is not for you to know the time or the dates or the times when He will set up His kingdom or His coming again. That's one of God's secrets. I trust that each one of us will take seriously the fact that our blessed Savior is coming again and we shall take seriously the privilege of serving Him while we are here.

I think I need to remind every Christian as well when you were debating whether you want Him to come today or not you may have looked inside and said I really expected to do a little more for the Savior before He came. I am in a backslidden condition and I don't want Him to come until I can get back to where I once was happy in His service enjoying the wonderful things that He has given to me. I trust that each one of us will search our hearts and be able to say I want the Lord Jesus to come in His time whenever He sees fit I want to be ready.

I don't need to know when but I want to be ready when He comes again. I think we should sing for our closing number number 216 216 When Jesus comes to reward His servants whether it be noon or night faithful to Him will He find us watching with our lamps all trimmed and bright O can you say you are ready, brother ready for the soul's bright home Say, will He find you watching, waiting, waiting when the Lord shall come 216 Shall we stand as we sing this song? When Jesus comes to Well, I didn't think your singing was too hearty Let's sing the last verse We bow once more to praise Thee for the wonderful salvation Thou hast provided for us until this moment and we thank Thee that Thou hast brought our hearts under this tremendous joy that we have the delightful time of waiting for our blessed Lord to return and to receive us to Himself We thank Thee that it's settled in heaven that Thou canst make no mistake we want Thee to come at the right time We are concerned about our loved ones who are still outside of Christ we pray that Thou by Thy Spirit put pressure on them give them no rest and no peace until they open their heart and receive this wonderful Savior even in this service if there should be any still outside we pray that they may see the wisdom of doing this before they leave the service we commit Thy word to Thee and ask Thy blessing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Amen

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