

## Acts 1:12-26: Waiting and the Ordinary Means of Grace

Context: **10** Days between (10 minutes, 10 hours, 10 days, 10 weeks, 10 years?) we don't know.

We know that it was ten days because the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Pentecost refers to the Feast of Weeks, which was held fifty days after Passover. Since the Lord was taken back to heaven forty days after the resurrection, which occurred at Passover, there must have been a ten-day period in which the disciples waited in Jerusalem.

Examples:

Abram was told to go to a land "that God would show him." So he left, and waited for God to show him as he sojourned in the land. Additionally, he waited until he was almost 100 years old for the promised son Isaac.

Joseph had to wait to get out of prison, and then wait another 14 years to be reunited with his family.

Moses had to wait until he was 40 to be useful to God and then wait another 40 years to see the promised land.

Joshua and the children of Israel had to wait 7 days for God to

Solomon had to wait for his hair to grow back before he could get revenge.

David had to wait for Saul to die before he could ascend to the throne.

The prophets had to wait for the vindication of God for them to be right.

Job waited forever, not knowing the heavenly discourse between God and Satan regarding his situation.

Jesus waited until the appointed time to become flesh.

The disciples were told to "watch and pray" which is another way of saying "wait."

Romans 8 says that the entire world is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God.

I. **Ordinary** means of grace: the instruments by which God communicates the **benefits** of redemption.

-not extraordinary, don't need to get riled up, fired up or stirred up. Don't need to get blasted or slain in the Spirit. Don't need a "word from the Lord." Don't seek an experience. Seek God in the way He says to do so. Seeking emotional outpourings is unhealthy and incorrect focus that is idolatry. It leads to emotional instability, theological error, and perverse practice that can, in some cases, actually be demonic.

Spiritual and practical matters:

-**Obedience** (cf v4 w/ v12) they were told to go and wait.

\*the old hymn says it well: "trust and obey, there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey.

-Fellowship (v14)

\*you need people. "When you are by yourself, you're in bad company." -Mark Mitchell. Don't isolate

\*people need you. Hebrews 10:25 says not to forsake or neglect the assembling of yourselves, as some are in the habit of doing. Be present, physically, and otherwise. This is a command, not an option. Some may say, "I didn't get much out of it." Good. That meant that you were there for someone else.

-Prayer (v14)

\*pray without ceasing "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (*1 Thessalonians 5:16-17*).

\*pray strategically

-**Administrative** duties (recognizing and choosing leaders)

- Fulfillment of Scripture:
  - V16 Doctrine of Scripture
  - V20 Quotes of Ps. 69:25 & 109:8
- V17 field cf Matt 27:3-7
- Definition of apostle: one who has seen the risen Lord and is tasked with the propagation of the Gospel
  - Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles: Gal 2:7; 1Tim 2:7
  - Barnabas: Acts 14:14; James, the bro of Jesus: 1Cor 15:7; Gal 1:19; Andronicus and Junia: Rom 16:7

- Casting of Lots: 1Chron 24:7; 25:8 Prov 16:33
  - Prequalification
  - Putting marked stones in a pot and shaking. (not a vote)
  - It is a way to trust God with the outcome of what seems otherwise left completely to chance. It is a confession to the sovereignty of God and belief that he wants His people to proceed.
  - Analysis paralysis
  - Just do something
  - It is a sin to do nothing when Scripture and reason dictate forward movement.
- Revelation 21:12-14 correlates the 12 apostles to the 12 tribes, further emphasizing the continuity between the testaments understood in covenant theology.

RE: ordinary means...The WCF tells us that Baptism and the Lord's supper, Scripture reading, preaching are the ordinary ways God transfers His blessings to His people.

*"The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation"* (WSC 88).

## II. **Sovereignty** of God

In the fullness of time, God sent His Son... Galatians 4:4

### **Westminster Confession of 1646: Chapter III. Of God's Eternal Decree**

I. God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass, ([Eph 1:11](#); [Rom 11:33](#); [Hbr 6:17](#); [Rom 9:15](#); [Rom 9:18](#)): yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, ([Jam 1:13](#); [Jam 1:17](#); [1Jo 1:5](#)); nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, ([Act 2:23](#); [Mat 17:12](#); [Act 4:27-28](#); [Jhn 19:11](#); [Pro 16:33](#)).

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, ([Act 15:18](#); [1Sa 23:11-12](#); [Mat 11:21](#); [Mat 11:23](#)); yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions, ([Rom 9:11](#); [Rom 9:13](#); [Rom 9:16](#); [Rom 9:18](#)).

Isaiah 40:31: *“but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”*

Of course, we are not waiting for the Holy Spirit, but we are waiting for the ultimate redemption.

Additionally, God is more concerned with our character than our circumstances. We think that God should be our magic genie in a bottle and do what we ask. But that is not how it works. He puts us in situations that He wants use to accomplish His purposes. We need to be careful.

### **III. The great disconnect between what we feel and what we know.**

The disconnect is when what we feel is in contrast to what we know. Our emotions don't match our beliefs. This is always the test of trust.

This is one of the differences between people who are spiritually healthy and those who are not. There are people who have some knowledge of the scriptures but are emotionally or practically out of sorts. They are unstable or unskilled at life. They lack the capacity to deal with stress and difficulty. They don't do life well. These are people who are easily overwhelmed and are like stalks in the wind, easily blown by the winds of culture and circumstance. They are paralyzed by options and can't make decisions. They are ALWAYS waiting and never moving.

Additionally, there are those who, being hard charging, get out in front of God and try to do God's work for Him. These are people who tend to be driven and high accomplisners or what I call producers or crank turners. Sometimes, these are control freaks and micromanagers who are always trying to push things in the direction they think things should go.

We want to be God. We want to control the things that we have no control over and don't want the control that we do have. We don't like God's timing. Peter, recognizing this, says “a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day.” (2Pt 3:8). He is coming. We wait. Faithfully, fervently, fruitfully.

Obey God.

Trust Him.

Follow the ordinary means of grace.

We wait faithfully, expectantly, and humbly.

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-the instruments by which God communicates the \_\_\_\_\_ of redemption.

Spiritual and practical matters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (cf v4 w/ v12) they were told to go and wait.
- Fellowship (v14)
- Prayer (14)
- \_\_\_\_\_ duties (recognizing and choosing leaders, v12-26)
  - Fulfillment of Scripture:
  - Definition of apostle:
  - Casting of Lots:

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### II. \_\_\_\_\_ of God

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Trust Him.

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