

Acts 1:6-14

God's Spirit prepares to clear the bench

(Christianity is not a spectator sport. We are all players.)

A. Our lives are shaped by our expectations.

"6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

What did the disciples expect?

- **National focus** – The nation Israel was the focus of attention.
- **Revived old system** - The restoration of a former lost kingdom was in view.
- **External change** – External political power was expected.
- **A passive role** – Jesus would do the ministry as the disciples watched.
- **The end** – The culmination of history was just around the corner.

Disciples' expectations	Reality
National focus	A new community
Revived old system	A new system
External change	A new heart
Passive role	An active role
The end	The beginning

Our expectations are also vital to our Christian walk.

1. We must resist the constant tendency to define the Christian message in terms of: Our Path (life style), People (culture), Plan (hopes), Pain (fears and disappointments).
2. We can guard against distortion of the Christian message by exposing ourselves to believers in other cultures , from other traditions, with different experiences, and from different places in history.
3. There were a number of expectations that needed adjustment before the Church of Jesus Christ would function, as it should.

Expectation #1

God will resurrect my broken dreams.

(The focus was not to be on the nation Israel but on **a new community** of the Holy Spirit called the Church.)

1. This is what God had in mind. A community of believers who shared a common vision yet with very diverse responsibilities and gifts.
2. This community would be the new body of Christ in the world through which Jesus would continue his ministry.
3. This new community would be made up of all nations bringing Gentiles and Jews together. Slave and free, male and female, all with equal status, sharing the same Spirit of Christ.

False expectation #2

God will accept me when I get more skill and discipline.

(The old form of the kingdom was not going to be renewed but rather it would be a radical new form **with a new system.**)

1. This new community would experience, model, and spread a radically new message – the covenant of grace through the resurrected Jesus who died for the sins of the world.

The Redemptive Covenants

through Moses	through Jesus
Law at Sinai (the Old Covenant) a Tutor by Hagar “the bondwoman”	Grace at Calvary (the New Covenant) the Gospel by Sarah “the free woman”

Galatians 4

“22 For it is written that **Abraham** had two sons, one by the **bondwoman** and one by the **free woman**. 23 But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the **promise**. 24 This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants,”

SINAI	CALVARY
Through Moses With Israel The Law Conditioned upon man's obedience Based upon works Was concluded at the Cross	Through Christ With the Church Grace Conditioned upon Christ's obedience Based upon faith Was initiated at the Cross

<p>Earthly, sinful priests</p> <p>Earthly tabernacle</p> <p>Faulty</p> <p>Limited access to God</p> <p>Physical working</p> <p>Demanded obedience</p> <p>Exodus - Gospels</p> <p>Malachi 3:7 "Return to me, and I will return to you.' says the Lord Almighty."</p>	<p>Heavenly, sinless priests</p> <p>True (heavenly) tabernacle</p> <p>Faultless</p> <p>Free access to God</p> <p>A cleansed conscience</p> <p>Enabled obedience</p> <p>Acts – Revelation</p> <p>I Jn.4:19 "We love because he first loved us."</p>
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2. It would justify the ungodly, welcome the sinner, and find glory in human weakness. It would meet people in their shame and guilt not their strength and merit.
3. The Apostles explain this new system in their writings.
 - **Heb.7:18-22** “18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. . . . 22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of **a better covenant**.”
 - **Heb.8:6-13** “6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of **a better covenant**, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.”
 - **Heb.9:15-28** “15 And for this reason He is the **mediator of a new covenant**, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

False expectation #3

God will change my circumstances and environment.

(The changes would not be to the external environment but every believer would receive **a new heart**.)

1. The dynamic change that would mark the Kingdom would not be political, social reform in the world, or military force, a power that the world would not understand or welcome.
2. It would be manifest in the weakness and humility of those who possessed it.
3. It would become evident as the disciples of Christ laid aside their lives to serve others.

Expectation #4

God does not need me.

(The changes would involve the active participation of the disciples. They would not be on the sidelines cheering Jesus on. They would be **participants** in the new order.)

1. The biggest change would be the redistribution of power from Jesus and the prophets and apostles to every man and woman, boy and girl.
2. There would be a whole kingdom of priests, prophets, evangelists, and etc. There would be no spectators. There would be no fans in the stands, everyone is on the court.

B. Our lives are shaped by our expectations of how God works.

7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

1. “Fixed by His own authority” strongly suggests that this part of God’s prophetic plan is already “placed” or “fixed” and is not subject to change.
2. It is important to note that while speculation about “end times” events is of great interest it can be a distraction from our calling. The disciples were called to understand the present ministry of the Holy Spirit rather than the future plan for Israel.
3. This passage is not an exhortation but a prophecy. These disciples would bear witness with their lives.
4. “Be witnesses” suggests that it will be the disciples’ whole life that will testify to the fact that they had seen the resurrected Christ.

C. Our lives are shaped by our expectations of how God works and what He expects of us.

9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; 11 and they also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

1. Verse 11 is the Biblical basis for the teaching that Christ will physically return to earth at the end of this age.
2. Who were the two men mentioned in vs.11? Some have noted the parallel with Lk.9:30-31 where at the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appear in a similar manner. Moses representing the Law and Elijah representing the Prophets are adding their notarization to the events.

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James {the son} of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas {the

son} of James. 14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with {the} women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

A. How did the disciples respond?

1. Being of one mind.
2. They waited and prayed.

B. Do we know when to wait and pray and when to go and be?

1. There are too many people in our churches who are still waiting and praying when they should be going and being.
2. Don’t be among them. In the first verses of this chapter we were told that Jesus still lives. He is alive. But guess what – because he lives, we also are alive. We are his present body.
3. On which side of Pentecost are you going to live? The far side with its misplaced expectations, passive confusion, and powerless doubt – or the near side with a clear vision of the calling of the believer, a confident expectation the Jesus wants to live his life through you, and a power to rise above and live above all the stuff that constitutes darkness.

Conclusion

- **SKEPTIC** – If you want to understand the Christian faith, this element is absolutely critical. Some of what you see in the church can be explained by the social scientists, by the historian, and by the psychologist. But there are many things that will simply not fit any natural explanation.
- **SEEKER** – If you are interested in this man Jesus, the community that he founded, the message that his Spirit brings, then listen to the story of this book, watch the people in this church, and search the depths of your life to see if indeed the longing of your heart is met right here.
- **SAINT** – Wake from your sleep. The same Spirit that fell on those early disciples and formed the faith community of the early church, is alive in the church today. You who believe have the power to be the body of Christ to this generation. Jesus left this world after the words recorded in this passage. These were his last recorded words. But his work was by no means through. He is alive and seeking expression through you, today, and every day that you live and confess faith in Christ. The time of waiting is over for you and me. We are to go and be.