

## **Title: What Are You Waiting For?**

### **[Slide 1]**

**Text: Acts 1:1-11**

### **A New Time**

**Solomon's Porch:**

### **[Slide 2]**

It was time.

It was time to announce a new time and a new King. The task fell to a most unlikely person, a disciple of Jesus named Peter.

Seven weeks ago, to the day, Peter had been hiding from Roman soldiers and Temple police. He had promised Jesus that he would follow Him to the death. He had followed Jesus after His arrest, all the way to the High Priest's palace. But when a servant girl sniffed him out as a Jesus follower, he panicked and denied ever having known Jesus at all.

But now, as he took his place in the immense colonnaded structure known as Solomon's Porch, he was about to make the most important speech of his life. Here in Yahweh's Temple he was about to announce a new Time, a new kind of Life, and a new King. The Age to Come was already here!

So what was it that made *this time* different?

### **"He is risen":**

Peter's transformation began when the women came from Jesus' tomb with the news that He had been raised from the dead. While the other disciples refused to take the women's report seriously, Peter had to see for himself:

### **[Slide 3]**

*Luke 24:12 NIV*

*Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.*

Peter's world was beginning to be turned upside down. Messiahs weren't supposed to be crucified as criminals. Peter himself had tried to talk Jesus out of taking such a path. So when Jesus was crucified, Peter must have assumed it was the end of the story. Jesus wasn't really the Messiah after all. But now the women were saying that Jesus was raised from the dead – just as He had promised! Could it be that Israel's Messiah King had been enthroned in a way nobody could have ever imagined?

Later that same day he got his answer. Jesus appeared to him as well. The disciples told two of their friends who had met Jesus that evening on the road out of town:

**[Slide 4]**

*Luke 24:34 NIV*

*"It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."*

God had raised a dead man to life. Wasn't this supposed to happen at the end of time, the end of the Present Age? So what did this say about Time itself? Were they now on their time or on God's Time? Was this the Present Age or the promised Age to Come?

**A new time:**

When Jesus took His disciples to the top of the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem and its Temple, they tried to connect the dots. The prophet Zechariah had predicted that the LORD would come and stand on this very mountain and fight against Israel's enemies. When the battle was over, it would finally be the New Age they had all longed for:

**[Slide 5]**

*Zechariah 14:9 NIV*

*The LORD will be **king** over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.*

No wonder the disciples couldn't help but ask:

**[Slide 6]**

*Acts 1:6 NIV*

"Lord, are you **at this time** going to restore the **kingdom** to Israel?"

But the mountain didn't split in two like Zechariah had predicted. There was no fire from heaven or angel army coming to drive out the Romans. Instead, Jesus said:

**[Slide 7]**

*Acts 1:7-8 NIV*

*"It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."*

It was a new time, but not like they had imagined. It was the New Age right in the middle of the Present Age. And their job would be to let the rest of the world know that God was already here.

## **The Day of Pentecost**

### **The Upper Room:**

Having said those words, Jesus ascended to Heaven before their eyes, leaving them to puzzle things out: A new time, new resurrection life on the loose, a new King. But how did it all fit together? He had given them a mysterious clue: the Holy Spirit would come upon them and give them the power to be witnesses and heralds of this new King. But what would that look like?

The answer came at another special time: Pentecost. It was at this time that Jews celebrated God's giving of His Law on Mt. Sinai, seven weeks after the first Passover and the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea. Now, seven weeks after Passover and the resurrection of Jesus, they suddenly found themselves once again in the middle of God's Time:

**[Slide 8]**

*Acts 2:1-4 NIV*

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and*

*filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.*

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*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (or languages) as the Spirit enabled them.*

It was Mt. Sinai and the Presence of God all over again. But this time the power and glory of God rested on each of them, and God's Spirit turned each of them into His Temple!

**Into the streets:**

The 120 believers burst into the streets of Jerusalem, praising God in the power of the Holy Spirit. The city was filled with pilgrims from all over the Empire. In their amazement, they asked:

**[Slide 10]**

*Acts 2:7-8, 11-12 NIV*

*"Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"*

*Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"*

**The Big Question:**

"What does this mean?" That's the question Peter had been asking himself ever since he poked his head into an empty tomb. That's the question the disciples had been puzzling over when they walked home from the Mount of Olives. Now the crowd asked the same thing: "What does this mean?"

Isn't that just how God works? When He does a new thing, He doesn't provide an instruction manual. He presents us with a puzzle. Poke around and you'll find that it comes with clues. But you have to take a new journey.

You see, God is inviting us to step into a whole new dimension – the Age to Come. And He is doing it in the here and now. We find God working in our ordinary lives: The mighty power of the Creator/Savior God present in our utterly limited time-bound existence. We're in between two worlds, two

realities. Our way of thinking, our timetables and predictions, don't fit. We can't even ask the right questions. So what does it all mean?

## What Are You Waiting For?

### Back to Solomon's Porch:

Peter's first assignment as he stood in front of a curious crowd in Solomon's Porch was to help them wrap their heads around God's Time. Like himself, they had fixed ideas about how God was going to rescue Israel. Peter needed to lead them on a new journey to the ultimate Promised Land. To do so, the first thing he needed to clear up was their misunderstanding of what Time it was.

He begins by explaining what *was not happening*: The people who were speaking in other languages *were not intoxicated*. They had not been hitting the bottle before breakfast! What was happening was nothing less than the outpouring of God's Spirit that had been prophesied long ago. Peter explains:

### [Slide 11]

*Acts 2:16-18 NIV*

*"No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

*"**In the last days**, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit **in those days**, and they will prophesy'."*

God's Time had invaded human time. He had poured out His Spirit upon the men and women who had been praying together in the Upper Room across town. Today, right now, was in some mysterious way, *also the "last days."*

### God's Rescue!

So just what were the "last days"? The Last Days were the time when the Present Age came to an end and the Age to Come began. This would be the time when God rescued His people and restored His entire world. And that made *right now* the most important time of all! If the Last Days had begun, then God was present in a brand new way. No wonder Peter finishes his quotation from Joel with these words:

**[Slide 12]**

*Acts 2:21 NIV*

*"And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

**What are you waiting for?**

I remember going sailing with my sister on a storm day on the Maine coast. As we were sailing back to the marina the boat capsized, leaving us trying to hold onto the slimy bottom of an upside down boat in the cold Maine water. Then, after several minutes, we saw the launch from the marina coming toward us, white water flying out from its bows. Rescue was on the way! It was no longer a time for struggling to hang on for dear life. It was time to get ready to be carried back to safety. In fact, unbeknownst to us, the rescue mission had begun the moment we had capsized.

God has done the same thing for you and me. We're like sailors tossed into the sea, with no way to save themselves. But God has already launched the rescue mission. No waiting for the end of Time. No hanging on desperately for the rest of our earthly lives. He is already here to save.

And better yet, He continues to pour out His "Last Days" Spirit upon those who follow Jesus. This is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised His disciples just before He ascended to Heaven. He not only saves us, but He makes us part of the rescue mission! All you have to do is recognize what Time it is, and ask Him to pour out His Spirit upon you.

So what are you waiting for?