

You Shall Be My Witnesses: Acts 1:6-11 Explained

Scriptures for Today

Acts 1:6-11

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 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. 8 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 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.

Introduction — The Book of Acts

The book of Acts is the continuation of the Gospel of Luke. Luke wrote both, and Acts picks up right after the resurrection of Jesus Christ and leads directly into the spread of the gospel through the apostles.

This book shows the transition from Jesus being physically present on the earth to His work continuing through His followers by the power of the Holy Ghost. What you see here is the foundation of everything that follows in the New Testament church. This is where the mission is clearly given and then carried out.

What Happened Before This? (Acts 1:1-5)

Before this, Jesus had already risen from the dead and showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He spent forty days with the disciples speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, confirming who He is and what He came to do.

He also commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. That promise is the coming of the Holy Ghost, which would empower them for the work ahead. So they are gathered together, instructed, and waiting for what God said would come.

A Question About the Kingdom

Acts 1:6

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

The disciples are still focused on restoration of the kingdom to Israel. They know the Old Testament promises about the kingdom, and they are asking if this is the moment those promises will be fulfilled.

Their question shows they are thinking about timing and visible rule. They are looking for something immediate and physical, something they can see established right then. But Jesus is about to redirect their attention away from speculation and toward responsibility.

Not for You to Know — God’s Authority Over Timing

Acts 1:7

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.

Jesus does not deny that there is a plan or a timing. Instead, He makes it clear that the timing belongs to the Father and is not for them to know.

This is a direct correction. They are asking about “when,” and Jesus tells them that is not their responsibility. Their focus should not be on figuring out God’s timeline, but on obeying what God has already told them to do.

Yet, people STILL today try to figure out when the end times are going to happen. And they always say it's going to happen in their lifetime. And so many have been wrong over and over again. So, we need to focus on what God has told us to do.

Power and Purpose — The Mission Defined

Acts 1:8

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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Jesus shifts completely from timing to mission. He tells them they will receive power, but that power comes from the Holy Ghost, not from themselves. This is not human ability or effort—it is God working through them.

Then He defines their purpose. They are to be witnesses unto Him. That means they are to testify of who Jesus is, what He did, and what they have seen. The pattern is clear: start in Jerusalem, then expand to Judaea, then Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth. This shows a progression outward, not staying in one place.

The Ascension — Jesus Taken Up

Acts 1:9

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

After giving the mission, Jesus is taken up into heaven. This is the ascension, and it is a visible, physical event. They are watching it happen with their own eyes.

The cloud receiving Him out of their sight shows the moment He is no longer visible. This is the transition point where His physical presence is removed, and the work is about to continue through them.

Looking Up — Focus in the Wrong Direction

Acts 1:10

And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

The disciples are staring into heaven, watching where Jesus went. Their attention is fixed upward, and they remain there looking.

At that moment, two men in white apparel appear. These are clearly messengers from God, and their presence signals that something needs to be said. The disciples are about to be corrected again in their focus.

Why Stand Gazing? — The Promise and the Correction

Acts 1:11

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.

They are asked a direct question. Why are you standing there looking into heaven? The implication is that they should not remain standing still.

Then the promise is given. The same Jesus who was taken up will come back in the same way. That confirms His return, and it is just as real as His ascension.

But the correction is clear. Do not stand still and stare. You have a mission to carry out.

What Happened Before All of This?

Before this moment, Jesus had completed His work on the cross, was buried, and rose again. He proved He was alive and taught His disciples for forty days.

Now He gives them their mission, promises power through the Holy Ghost, and ascends into heaven. This is the handoff from His earthly ministry to their work going forward.

Practical Applications

1. **God has a plan and a timeline, but not everything about that plan is for you to know.** Your responsibility is not to figure out every detail, but to obey what God has clearly told you.
2. **The power to do God's work does not come from you.** It comes from the Holy Ghost, and without that power, the work cannot be done correctly.
3. **The mission is clear.** You are to be a witness of Jesus Christ, starting where you are and reaching outward to others.
4. **Standing still and doing nothing is not obedience.** God has given a command, and that command requires action.

Conclusion

The disciples wanted to know when the kingdom would be restored. Jesus told them that was not their concern and gave them something greater to focus on.

They were given power, a clear mission, and a command to be witnesses. They were not told to stand and wait for things to happen—they were told to go and do the work.

That same command still stands. You are not here to watch. You are here to be a witness.

Let's pray.