



Acts: 1:6-11 “My Witnesses”

Intro:

Last week, in the opening verses of Acts, we saw that Jesus is not finished working. The Gospel of Luke showed us what Jesus began to do and teach, and the Book of Acts shows us how He continues His work through His church by the power of the Holy Spirit. We also saw that after His resurrection, Jesus spent forty days teaching His disciples about the Kingdom of God and preparing them for the mission ahead. Now as we come to verses 6–11, the disciples ask Jesus a question about the timing of the Kingdom yet Jesus redirects their focus away from trying to figure out the timing and instead points them toward the mission. In these verses, Jesus reminds His disciples—and us—that until He returns, we are called to be His witnesses to the world.

V.6-7

“So when they had come together, *they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* He said to them, **“It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.”**

1. The Question

Though at first glance this question might sound ignorant to us in hindsight, it really was not all that ignorant. The disciples knew the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel, and they knew Jesus had spoken of establishing the New Covenant with them at the Last Supper (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20). They understood that the coming of the Messiah was connected to the promises God had made throughout the Old Testament. But what they still did not fully understand was that the Kingdom Jesus came to establish was far greater than a merely national or political restoration. Jesus was establishing the Kingdom of God—a Kingdom that would begin with the salvation and transformation of people from every nation through the New Covenant (Isaiah 49:6; Daniel 7:13–14).

Notice carefully: Jesus does not deny that God has a plan and fulfillment for His promises. Instead, He redirects their focus away from trying to know the times and seasons and toward the mission He has given them. The problem was not that they were thinking about the Kingdom—the problem was that they were becoming distracted by speculation instead of obedience.

And we can easily do the same thing today. Many people become consumed with trying to figure out dates, timelines, signs, and prophetic speculation, while neglecting the very mission Christ clearly gave His church (Matthew 28:18–20). Jesus makes it clear that the Father has fixed these things by His own authority. Our responsibility is not to obsess over the timing, but to remain faithful in the mission. In many ways, it is actually God’s mercy that we do not know the exact timing. Imagine if the disciples had known Christ would not return for over 2,000 years. Perhaps some would have become discouraged or complacent. But instead, every generation of believers is called to live with urgency, expectancy, and faithfulness.

V.8

“*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**”*”

2. The Redirection

Jesus redirects their attention away from speculation and back to mission. It is almost as if Jesus is saying, “Do not focus on trying to know the times—focus on being My witnesses.” And even in the places He mentions—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth—we see something important about the Kingdom He came to establish. The Gospel would begin in Jerusalem, but it would not remain there. The Kingdom of God would spread outward to Judea, Samaria, and ultimately to the nations. Through Christ, God was fulfilling His promises to Abraham—that through his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:14, 29). This is not the replacement of God’s promises, but their fulfillment and expansion in Christ. Under the New Covenant, the people of God are now being gathered from every tribe, tongue, and nation through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:11–22). And at the center of this mission is the call to be His witnesses.

The Greek word used for “witnesses” is *martyrs*, which is where we get our English word “martyr.” A witness is someone who testifies about what they have seen and heard. But in the Book of Acts, this witness would

often come with suffering, persecution, and even death. This calling goes far beyond merely talking about Jesus. To be Christ's witness means to belong to Him completely—to testify about Him through our words, our lives, our obedience, and even our suffering. Christianity was never meant to be something we simply add to our lives. Christ calls us to fully surrender our lives for His glory.

V.9

“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, **“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”**”

3. The Motivation

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples stood gazing into the sky. Then two angels appeared and asked them, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?” The question almost carries the idea: “Why are you standing still?” Jesus had already given them their instructions. They were to return to Jerusalem, wait for the promised Holy Spirit, and then go out as His witnesses to the nations. And in many ways, we can fall into the same temptation. We know the mission Christ has given us, yet many times we remain spiritually stationary. We wait, delay, become distracted, or become overly comfortable while the world around us desperately needs the Gospel.

Perhaps the disciples were still overwhelmed. Perhaps part of them wondered if Jesus would immediately return. Whatever the case, the angels redirect them back toward the mission.

As believers, we are not called to passively wait for Christ's return—we are called to wait actively. We live with expectation, but also with obedience. We stay on mission. And this is our great motivation: the same Jesus who ascended into heaven will one day return in glory. He will return physically, visibly, and victoriously just as He left. Our King is coming again. So until that day, we do not stand still staring at the sky. We live faithfully, proclaim boldly, walk in the power of the Spirit, and give ourselves fully to the mission of Christ (**Titus 2:11–14**).

Conclusion Main:

““Thus says the Lord of hosts: **Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?** declares the Lord of hosts. **Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.**” Haggai 1:7-9 ESV

Just like in the days of Haggai, it can be easy for us to become distracted by the cares, comforts, and pursuits of this world while neglecting the Kingdom of God and the mission Christ has given us. We can become so focused on building our own lives, our own plans, and our own comforts that we forget the incredible privilege we have been given—to be Christ's witnesses. The world may oppose us, discourage us, or tempt us to become spiritually passive. But Christ has not called us to stand still. He has called us to live on mission, empowered by the Holy Spirit, faithfully proclaiming His Gospel until the day He returns. So let us not become distracted with lesser things. Let us live with urgency, surrender, and faithfulness as we await the return of our King.

Memory Verse:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”” Acts 1:8

