

Acts 1:6-11 – The Kingdom of God and the Mission of the Disciples

Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

- A. What does the question of the disciples indicate concerning their understanding of Jesus and His kingdom? Vs. 6. *They didn't fully understand what Jesus had taught them. We will look at what Jesus had taught and what the disciples understood about the kingdom.*
1. What had Jesus taught about the Kingdom?
 - a. Mark 1:14-15 'Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, (15) and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"
 - b. Jesus never gives a definition of the Kingdom of God (Kingdom of Heaven), nor does He ever make an explicit reference to the restoration of David's kingdom (New Testament History, F.F. Bruce, p.170).¹ (but see Matt. 21:1-16; 22:42-45 and Luke 19:37-40; also John 6:15 for Jesus' rejection of an earthly kingship.)
 - c. Jesus was fulfilling God's messianic mandate of Isaiah 61:1-3. Jesus confirms this in Luke 7:19-23 (cf. Matt. 11:2-6).
 - d. Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God was a present reality: Luke 11:14-20.
 - e. Jesus also taught that the kingdom of God was present, was spiritual, but in its fullness it was yet to come – the tension of "already, but not yet": Luke 11:2; Luke 17:20-35; Luke 19:11-27.
 - f. Based on Jesus' teaching, the disciples expected to participate as leaders in the coming kingdom: see Mark 10:35-45; Matt. 20:20-28; Luke 22:24-30.
 - g. In order to be included in the kingdom of God, one had to be born again: John 3:1-21 (see also 1 Corinthians 15:50).
 - h. Acceptance into the kingdom demanded total commitment to Jesus: Matt. 6:33; Matt. 7:13-14; Matt. 16:15-28; Mark 8:29-38; Luke 12:8-10;
 - i. Jesus taught that His kingdom is not of this world: John 18:36.
 2. What was revealed about their understanding of the kingdom by their question?
 - a. They knew Jesus was the one to set up the kingdom.
 - b. They were looking for a political kingdom (JMB): 2 Samuel 7:1-29; Psalm 89; Ps. 132:11,17; Notice, however, the promise of the kingdom being forever, which is not possible for an earthly kingdom.
 - c. They were looking for an ethnically restricted kingdom (JMB) – "restore (reconstitute) the kingdom to *Israel*?"
 - d. They were looking for a geographically restricted kingdom (JMB)²: Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem, so the kingdom would be governed from Jerusalem.
 - e. They probably expected to be leaders in this restored Davidic kingdom.
 - f. They did not yet understand that there was a far worse captivity/occupation from which Jesus wanted to free His brethren of than that of the Romans. See Hebrews 2.
 - g. They did not yet understand that what they were to receive via Christ's Kingdom was far greater than what they understood or desired. See Hebrews 12:22-28.

Acts 1:7-8 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. (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."

- B. What does Jesus' answer reveal about what He thought was important for the Disciples to know?
1. The times and seasons were privileged information of the Father and not something about which they were to be concerned. It was the authority only of the Father.
 2. Jesus had taught already that the final form of the kingdom was not imminent in Luke 19:11.

3. The power (dunamis) they were wanting was insufficient for their kingdom tasks. The power that they would receive was of the Holy Spirit, and that power would make them effective in accomplishing their mission. See John 16:1-15.
4. The effective witnesses of God (Isaiah 43:10 and 44:8) were to be the disciples of the Messiah. “The task which Israel as a nation had not fulfilled was taken up by Jesus, as the perfect Servant of the Lord, and passed on by Him to His disciples.”³ See also Isaiah 49:6 and Acts 13:46-47.
5. Jesus outlines the stages that the Gospel would travel: Jerusalem, all Judea and Samaria, and finally to the Gentiles at the ends of the earth.
 - a. The Lord’s Word In Jerusalem (1:1-7:60).
 - b. The Lord’s Word Dispersed to Judea and Samaria (8:1-12:25).
 - c. The Lord’s Word to the End of the Earth, Part 1: Asia and Greece (13-20).
 - d. The Lord’s Word to the End of the Earth, Part 2: Rome (21-28).⁴

C. What Kind of Witnesses were the Disciples to be? (Read Boice 26-28)

1. Witnesses of what they knew (wit-to know or know) about who Jesus was, what He had done, what He had taught. They were also witnesses of His resurrection. See Luke 24:44-49.
2. They were to advance Christ’s kingdom not by coercion, but by testimony to the truth.
3. The power of the Holy Spirit was for their testimony and witness – see Revelation 12:11. The gates of Hell were powerless to stop it. We are heirs of their witness.
4. They were to be international witnesses. The worldwide spread of the Gospel began with these disciples.⁵

¹ Kingdom Scripture references in the New Testament. This is not intended to be exhaustive regarding a study of the Kingdom of God, for there are passages in which the word kingdom is not used but the context of the passage is clearly referring to either a description of the kingdom or how the citizens of the Kingdom of God are to operate in attitude, thought, and actions: Mat 3:2; Mat 4:17; Mat 4:23; Mat 5:3; Mat 5:10; Mat 5:19; Mat 5:20; Mat 6:10; Mat 6:33; Mat 7:21; Mat 8:11; Mat 8:12; Mat 9:35; Mat 10:7; Mat 11:11; Mat 11:12; Mat 12:25; Mat 12:26; Mat 12:28; Mat 13:11; Mat 13:19; Mat 13:24; Mat 13:31; Mat 13:33; Mat 13:38; Mat 13:41; Mat 13:43; Mat 13:44; Mat 13:45; Mat 13:47; Mat 13:52; Mat 16:19; Mat 16:28; Mat 18:1; Mat 18:3; Mat 18:4; Mat 18:23; Mat 19:12; Mat 19:14; Mat 19:23; Mat 19:24; Mat 20:1; Mat 20:21; Mat 21:31; Mat 21:43; Mat 22:2; Mat 23:13; Mat 24:14; Mat 25:1; Mat 25:34; Mat 26:29; Mar 1:15; Mar 3:24; Mar 4:11; Mar 4:26; Mar 4:30; Mar 6:23; Mar 9:1; Mar 9:47; Mar 10:14; Mar 10:15; Mar 10:23; Mar 10:24; Mar 10:25; Mar 11:10; Mar 12:34; Mar 14:25; Mar 15:43; Luk 1:33; Luk 4:43; Luk 6:20; Luk 7:28; Luk 8:1; Luk 8:10; Luk 9:2; Luk 9:11; Luk 9:27; Luk 9:60; Luk 9:62; Luk 10:9; Luk 10:11; Luk 11:2; Luk 11:17; Luk 11:18; Luk 11:20; Luk 12:31; Luk 12:32; Luk 13:18; Luk 13:20; Luk 13:28; Luk 13:29; Luk 14:15; Luk 16:16; Luk 17:20; Luk 17:21; Luk 18:16; Luk 18:17; Luk 18:24; Luk 18:25; Luk 18:29; Luk 19:11; Luk 19:12; Luk 19:15; Luk 21:31; Luk 22:16; Luk 22:18; Luk 22:29; Luk 22:30; Luk 23:42; Luk 23:51; Joh 3:3; Joh 3:5; Joh 18:36; Act 1:3; Act 1:6; Act 8:12; Act 14:22; Act 19:8; Act 20:25; Act 28:23; Act 28:31; Rom 14:17; 1Co 4:20; 1Co 6:9; 1Co 6:10; 1Co 15:24; 1Co 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; Col 4:11; 1Th 2:12; 2Th 1:5; 2Ti 4:1; 2Ti 4:18; Heb 1:8; Heb 12:28; Jas 2:5; 2Pe 1:11; Rev 1:6; Rev 1:9; Rev 5:10; Rev 11:15; Rev 12:10; Rev 16:10.

² Observations taken from Acts: An Expository Commentary, James Montgomery Boice, p. 23.

³ Commentary On The Book Of The Acts, by F.F. Bruce, p.39.

⁴ Let’s Study Acts, Dennis E. Johnson, p.xxiii-xxiv.

⁵ Boice, p. 26-28.