

Empowered Witnesses – Acts 1:1-11

Introduction to the series and the book.

Christ has given His Church a mission. (We are witnesses)

The Holy Spirit empowers us for that mission. (We are empowered)



EMPOWERED
WITNESSES



Luke 24:44–53

^[44] Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ^[45] Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ^[46] and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ^[47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ^[48] You are witnesses of these things. ^[49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

^[50] And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them.

^[51] While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ^[52] And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ^[53] and were continually in the temple blessing God. (ESV)

Acts 1:1–11

^[1] In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ^[2] until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ^[3] He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

^[4] And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ^[5] for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

^[6] So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ^[7] 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.” ^[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.

^[10] And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ^[11] 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.” (ESV)

Empowered Witnesses

September 4, 2022

Open: What do you know about the book of Acts? What are you looking forward to gaining through a study of this book?

Read & Discuss: Acts 1:1-11.

1. In verses 1-5, what does Luke say about Jesus regarding His last forty days on earth? In light of what you know that Luke will say in the book of Acts, why might Luke have felt it wise to point out these things at the beginning of his book?
2. In your own words, how would you describe the commission Jesus gave His followers in Acts 1:8? How do you think the disciples might have felt when they heard this commission? What obstacles could they have anticipated?
3. In both Acts 1:8 and 1:4-5 Jesus promised His disciples the Holy Spirit. **Read John 14:26 and 16:7-11.** How would what the disciples knew of the Holy Spirit have encouraged them in light of the commission Jesus gave them? How have you seen the Holy Spirit help you in this way?
4. As you look at verses 6-11, how would you describe what Jesus does *not* want His disciples to be concerned with so they are free to focus on His mission? What do you imagine Jesus might have to tell believers today to stop being preoccupied with?
5. Given what you know of the disciples' track record with Jesus up to this point, how would you encourage a believer who doubts God can use them to help fulfill His mission on earth?
6. For these witnesses, what was the significance of Jesus' ascension into heaven (v. 9)? What would it have meant for them and for us if Jesus had not ascended to heaven? How is the promise of Acts 1:11 that Jesus will one day return meant to encourage His followers?
7. If you were discipling a new believer, how would you explain to them in practical ways the implications of Acts 1:8 for their lives? What's one way you could be involved in this commission this week?

Pray: Pray that both as individuals and as a group we will be faithful to Jesus' mission while depending on the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Pray as well that as we go through the book of Acts, we will be transformed into "empowered witnesses" in greater ways.

Acts 1:1-11.

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(ESV)