

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Kick-Starting a Plan to Reach the World

Acts 1:6–11

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

The disciples stood amid the olive trees on that mountain near Jerusalem listening to their risen Lord one last time. Except they were no longer disciples—Jesus had just commissioned them as apostles. And without warning, the feet of Jesus elevated off the dirt, and the clouds in the blue sky above them received Him out of their sight. Jesus was gone.

Confused, they strained to see their Lord when, immediately, two angels appeared and said that He would return just as He came. Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit. He gave them a strategy. Their purpose was clear. Jesus charged the apostles to bear witness to Him across the world in the Spirit's power until He returns. That's the plan.

Like the apostles, you and I live during the same in-between time. Like them, we have been equipped with their apostolic testimony recorded in Scripture and clothed with the same Spirit of power to carry out the same plan of reaching the world with Jesus' message.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

We'll soon explore Jesus' living words in Acts 1:6–11 which He told His apostles before entering heaven. In these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, we use the same Bible study method Chuck Swindoll uses. It consists of four steps: observation, interpretation, correlation, and application.

During observation, we use only the Bible. During interpretation, we use study resources. Good commentaries always aid our study of the Scriptures. Because we will be studying a passage in Acts, you may want to add to your library Chuck's *commentary* on Acts from his *Living Insights New Testament Commentary Series*.

Quotable

*To reach an ever-challenging world,
Spirit-led power
must be involved.
We dare not do it
in the flesh.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Searching the Scriptures Tip 1

The Bible can be an intimidating book containing unusual language from different cultures that existed thousands of years ago—not to mention the small print and hundreds of pages! To make it easy, Chuck has simplified the Bible’s content into three categories: 1) people, 2) events, and 3) great truths known as doctrines. We’ll apply these three categories later in this study to show you how they relate.

The Bible does not contain merely human words nor the philosophy of the learned. God breathed the words of Scripture. His Spirit produced it—and it still speaks today. For that reason, it’s always best to pray for understanding anytime we read it. The psalmist says:

*Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions;
I will put them into practice with all my heart. (Psalm 119:34)*

Restate this prayer in your own words below. Think carefully on your words, and pray them genuinely.



Observation: What Does the Passage Say?

Open your Bible and grab something for notetaking—either physical or electronic. In this first step, called observation, we inspect the details of what’s written. We inspect the passage from a bird’s-eye view as well as a mouse’s close-up perspective.

So let’s begin by reading Acts 1:6–11. Read it slowly, several times, and write down important details you discover. Also, write down any questions you have.



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During observation, it's helpful to answer basic questions from the text to make sure we don't miss anything. Let's do that now.

Who were the people in Acts 1:6–11?

What main event occurred in Acts 1:6–11?

How did Jesus and the angels correct the disciples? (Hint: Look for two different corrections.)

The apostles wanted to rule the world when Jesus wanted them to reach the world. They looked up when they should've been looking out. Aren't we thankful for those moments when God redirects our steps? Afterward, we see how His ways are better. Always.



Interpretation: What Does the Passage Mean?

In this second step, called interpretation, we seek to understand what the author says. What point or points did the author make? We do this by examining both the cultural and literary contexts of the passage to get a better grip on how the original audience would have read the text.



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Acts 1:6–11

As Chuck mentioned in his sermon, this passage contains the transition of Jesus' disciples, who watched and learned from Jesus' ministry on earth, to apostles of Jesus who proclaimed what they witnessed and learned from Him. Use your Bible dictionary to look up *disciple* and *apostle*. If you don't have one, we recommend the *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Also, try Dr. Bill Mounce's free online Greek dictionary to look up *disciple* and *apostle*. As you read, remember these terms:

- *Gloss*: basic usage of the word
- *Definition*: English translations of the word
- *Concordance*: every location of the word in the New Testament in order of occurrence

Now, in the table below, record your understanding of the meaning of the two terms and how they differ.

Disciple	Apostle

Examining Acts 1:6 and 1:8, describe the difference between the kind of power the disciples wanted and the kind of power Jesus promised.



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Jesus said the power of the Holy Spirit would come upon them in order that they might be witnesses. As witnesses, they testified to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They also explained how Jesus came from God, how He reigns as Lord, and they beseeched all to turn to Him to receive forgiveness for their corrupt ways and to worship Him as the one, true God. What a powerful claim!

Jesus told the apostles they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Look up each location in your dictionary and write down the progression Jesus used. You can also reference a commentary or use Dr. Constable's [online](#) commentary if you don't have one.



Searching the Scriptures Tip 2

In his sermon on Acts 1:6–11, Chuck says the most important person in the Bible is Jesus. The Old Testament looks forward to Him, the Gospels look at Him, and the remaining New Testament documents look back on Him. In our passage, Jesus ascended into heaven. This momentous event leads to a key doctrine in theology. Since Jesus ascended into heaven, we know He will return (Acts 1:11), that He currently reigns at God's right hand (*Psalm 110:1*; *Acts 2:33*), and that He intercedes with the Father on our behalf (*Hebrews 7:24–27*). See the connection between the people, events, and great truths of the Bible?



Correlation: How Does the Passage Compare?

Correlation expands our understanding of a passage because we compare it with other passages in the Bible that speak on the same or a similar topic. The Bible interprets itself. In Acts 1:8, the power Jesus refers to regarding the Holy Spirit is the power to serve God as a witness. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit gave the apostles power to do miracles while at other times He gave them power to preach.



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Acts 4 contains a wonderful picture of the power given to the apostles. Take a moment to read this chapter. Describe how it illustrates the power which the Holy Spirit gave to the apostles as witnesses.

The God who worked in the lives of the apostles is the same God who loves you and works through your life. So don't be afraid, but take courage in our God who made the planets and the stars.



Application: What Does This Passage Instruct?

Like the apostles, we, too, live in the in-between time awaiting Jesus' second coming. We just examined Jesus kick-starting His plan to reach the world. Amazingly, we partake in the same plan as those who saw Jesus lift off the earth into the clouds almost two thousand years ago.

Locating Your Piece of the Earth

Jesus intends for His message to spread to all tribes and languages. Take time to reflect on how you have engaged Jesus' plan recently. Now consider if there's anything new God would have you do around your piece of the earth to advance His message. Have you felt your heart tug toward your non-Christian neighbor or your conscience prod you to give a bit more toward missions? Perhaps it's God! Take a moment to write what you've reflected upon and the actions you sense God's Spirit leading you to take.



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Sharing with Power

While God may not have us perform miracles like the apostles, we still receive power from the Holy Spirit to share the message of Jesus. Take a moment to write a simple prayer requesting God's power to share His glorious news with those people in your sphere of living who thirst for a sweet word to revive their souls. Then we'll pray together.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for making me a laborer in Your harvest. You are the Lord of the harvest who extends life, peace, and joy from Your Spirit because of the work of Your Son. Grateful to have life, we give You thanks. Eager to share this news, we ask for power. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. In Jesus' name, amen.



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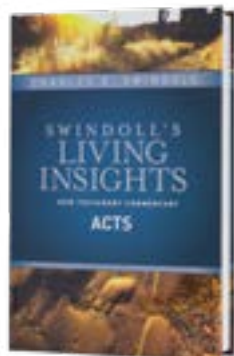
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Tools for Digging Deeper



Swindoll's Living Insights
New Testament Commentary
Insights on Acts
by Charles R. Swindoll
Hardcover book



Adventuring with God:
Following in the Apostles'
Footsteps
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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