

WEEKLY REFLECTION

The first half of Acts 1 ends with the apostles looking into heaven. Jesus, who had been among them for forty days after His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, had been taken up by a cloud into the sky. It makes sense for the apostles to gaze into heaven—it was such a strange thing to witness! But the question posed to the apostles is one we should be asking ourselves today: “why do you stand looking into heaven?” In other words, are you sitting and standing? Or are you scattering to bring the gospel to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth?

The story of Acts is that of the gospel’s journey from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The story of Acts 1 sets the scene for Jesus’ work through His people and His Spirit, as they proclaim the good news throughout the world. Before He commanded them to go, Jesus asked His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit’s arrival, as He knew they would be unable to accomplish the task by themselves.

Matthew 28:18-20, the famous passage of the Great Commission, records Jesus saying that He would be with His followers always, to the end of the age. He would be with them and empower them to do all that He had commanded them, which is to make disciples of all nations. The way that He fulfilled this promise was by sending the Holy Spirit to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. If ever we miss sight of the gravity of this fulfilled promise, John 16:7-15 reminds us of what it means to have the gift of God’s Spirit dwelling in each and every one of us.

So, church—are you scattering? Or are you standing and looking into heaven? There is much work to do, as the gospel must be brought to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth!

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

As we aim to become a church that gathers and scatters, let us reflect on the journey of the gospel starting from the book of Acts (whose full name is “The Acts of the Apostles”!), where a small group of Jewish men spread the good news to where we are today.

Have you considered the incredible journey the gospel went on to get to us? What do you know about its history and the dedicated men and women who undertook this task?

QUESTION TWO:

Most of us who read the passage of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) will focus on the command “go”. However, the original Greek has only one imperative, which is to “make disciples”. While we are called to go, we go *to* make disciples of all nations.

What was your initial understanding of this passage? Does this change anything? How might you “go”, whilst focusing on the command to “make disciples”?

QUESTION THREE:

We shared on Sunday the importance of balancing outreach to our local community (Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria) and unreached peoples (the ends of the earth). Both are equally important, as Revelation tells us that Christ’s sacrifice is for people from every tribe, language, and nation. (Rev. 5:9-10)

As we explore Acts in the coming weeks, have a think about how you can engage locally, but also pray and learn about unreached peoples (*The Joshua Project* prayer app is a great resource!). While most of us will not be called to go to the ends of the earth, we can still focus on our local community, and we have a part to play in praying for, commissioning, and / or supporting those who will go.