

Church 101: Witnessing to our Community (Acts 1-5)

I hope you know how much I love being a minister of the gospel, to people that I love, to people who love the gospel and love the Savior of the gospel. I love how fresh and timely and transforming its truths are as we study the Scriptures, and I've heard from a number that last week was no exception as we saw the love of the early church for the people of their church, and the challenge for us in our commitment to love the church despite all its faults (and all our faults). Today I want us to see again from the book of Acts how the early church's love went beyond their walls to their world, too. I want to again speak the truth in love and challenge us and myself in another area I think we need to grow in, our outreach to the lost from our love for the lost.

[this is a key study in our studies and series through Acts]

I love learning about the history of the church and last month a historian by the name of Dr. Michael Haykin introduced me¹ and others at a Sacramento gathering to a name I wasn't familiar with. He really challenged me in my affection for the lost and compassion in action, and if your hearts are cold today, I pray this helps rekindle them. Samuel Pearce was born in 1766 and died in 1799, but his short life of 33 years impacted many and impacted me as I heard Dr. Haykin talk about this Baptist minister from 4 centuries ago. Samuel Pearce was not a loud or yelling preacher, but he had a passion and compassion described as 'mildness and tenderness...[when he preached] the most careless were attentive, the most prejudiced became attentive, and the coldest felt that, in spite of themselves, they began to kindle.' [may we, too]

In his memoirs, Pearce writes "All was delightful; for Christ was all and in all...communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again." But he was not content to keep this to himself in prayer and worship with his church while others missed sweet delight in Christ. He wrote of "love of a crucified Redeemer...attractions of the cross" and how it "compelled me to...serve him among the heathen." Gospel power fuelled his Spirit-filled heart to witness in England's cities, villages, France, the nations

In Acts 1:8 Jesus said before He went to heaven: *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."*

In NT times religious Jews avoided Samaria like a plague literally. It was a place many tried to never set foot in and would shake the dust from their feet if they did, to not contaminate Israel with Samaritan dirt. Jews were raised to hate Samaritans like the English hated the French in Pearce's day.

Dr. Haykin said English boys in the late 1700s and early 1800s were taught literally ‘Be a good boy, love your mother, and hate the French!’ He writes: ‘Great Britain and France were locked in a titanic war, the Napoleonic War, which would last into the middle of the second decade of the next century... there was little love lost between the British and the French ... But Pearce was gripped by a far different passion than this that gripped many in Britain and France—his was the priority of the kingdom of Christ. In one of the last sermons that he ever preached ... [he quoted from Acts] “I am taught, that —of one blood God hath made all nations ... that national differences ought not to excite personal animosities...” By mid-December 1798, Pearce could not converse for more than a few minutes without losing his breath. Yet still he was thinking of the salvation of the lost. Writing to Carey around this time, he told him of a plan to take the gospel to France ... “to get five of our Ministers to agree that they will apply themselves to the French language ... then we [for he was obviously intending to be one of the five] might spend two months annually in that Country, and at least satisfy ourselves that Christianity was not lost in France...who can tell what God might do!”²

Dr. Haykin said to his dying day Samuel Pearce’s death-bed wish was to reach the French with the gospel or to die trying. It’s a fabulous example, Haykin said, of how we must love our enemies with the gospel. Pearce understood the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8 to the Jews who had been raised to hate Samaritans as their enemies, and Pearce understood the power of the Holy Spirit through the gospel to transform hate to love-motivated witness to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. It was this same power that changed the ancient world, and the modern missions movement in the days of Pearce and William Carey, and can rock our world today and reach hated terrorists.

It’s the power that can reach militant Muslims who hate Christians by a love stronger than their hate. It can also reach local Mormons or "moral" people. It transformed Peter’s racist thinking in Acts 10, which God hates, and the gospel penetrated Samaria in Acts 8 and went to Africa also in Acts 8. But in Acts 1-5 Spirit-filled gospel power came to the Jews first in Jerusalem. Acts 1:8 is the book’s key verse, and it’s been considered the outline of the book. By Spirit-filled gospel power the church is to be Christ's witnesses in their city first, then their surrounding community (Judea in this case), across other cultures (Samaria in this case), then to other countries across the earth. That's what happened: chapters 1-7 show the church's witness in Jerusalem
 chapters 8-12 show the witness in Judea and Samaria
 chapters 13-28 show witness to the ends of the earth

This is the outline and flow of the early church and healthy churches after it. The people of the church are to seek to reach people in their city first and in their surrounding communities and cross-culturally near or far, and outreach is to extend internationally as well. We can't just pat ourselves on the back because we give as a church to missionaries, we need to prod ourselves to be witnesses to our city and community more intentionally. Local outreach is an area for us to grow in as much or more than last week's message. Love for church comes easier for many ... loving the lost, reaching them is harder

Title of today's message: Church 101 - Witnessing to our Community

If you take notes, 3 parts: Our Mission, Our Message, Our Might (or power)

First, our Mission (in v. 8 Christ says “*be my witnesses*”)

The mission is to be witnesses for Christ. He says ‘*you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea...*’ [i.e., where they were living]. The place to start is the place where they lived, and the place we live. So let's start with the first part of Acts 1:8 (*in Jerusalem*) and first part of Acts (chap. 1-5). I know this is basic but the text says Jesus wants His followers to witness in their city and nearby community first (for them it was Jerusalem and Judea).

Acts 1:8 is the order we need to keep in order as we follow the marching orders of Christ our King. If we gotta start somewhere, why not here? The NT church starts here in Acts 2 in their community of Jerusalem, with very ordinary people testifying of the mighty deeds of their extraordinary Christ. They started with prayer in Acts 1:14, but then they took their witness to the public square in chapter 2, before crowds and in personal conversations like the beginning of Acts 3, and private interactions with persecutors (chap 4-5)

We need to start with the place this verse has in the book, the context of 1:8. Back in v. 3 it says Jesus gave this word to His disciples after He had risen: 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.* So for 40 days Jesus is teaching them about His kingdom. Their eyes had been opened since Luke 24 when He explained how all the OT pointed to Him and how they were to be His witnesses to all, starting in Jerusalem.

Now after 40 days of teaching about His kingdom and opening up the OT to their illuminated minds as Luke 24 explains, they want to know when Israel will embrace its King. Look down at v. 6: *So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”*

They're asking about the future consummation of the kingdom He taught. Is it now that we'll finally see 'thy kingdom come...on earth as it is in heaven?' There's 120 redeemed in v. 15, what about Israel's restoration? In v. 7 Jesus doesn't rebuke them for asking when it will happen. He doesn't reply 'No, I won't restore Israel because the church replaced Israel, so the church gets all the OT promises God gave Israel.' If Jesus bought into that theological idea, this would be the place to clarify it. It seems after 40 days of opening the eyes of His disciples and teaching on His kingdom, it's clear to them Israel has a future in Christ's kingdom, the only question they still have that He hasn't told them is the timing of Christ's future kingdom, its consummation?

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."*

Israel's future is the question in context leading up to v. 8. Lloyd-Jones says 'You notice that He does not say [in v. 7] Israel has no more concern with the kingdom. All He says is, you must not be concerned about times and seasons. Now if [those who think Israel has no kingdom future] were right, here was a wonderful opportunity for our Lord to say, Look here, do not ask about the restoration in any sense of Israel in terms of the kingdom, for Israel is finished as regards the kingdom. He does not say that. [Dr. Lloyd-Jones quotes from several OT passages and writes in his sermon on Romans 11 that Paul says they have a kingdom future w/ the church. He says quote] 'the Redeemer will exert this tremendous influence on the nation of the Jews and will turn iniquity from them and will bring them to faith and salvation and bring them into membership of the Christian church ... the Apostle then is saying [in Rom 11] the future restoration of Israel as a nation is certain.'³

That idea isn't limited to premillennialism or dispensationalism (Dr. Lloyd-Jones is neither but Puritans hundreds of years ago also connected Rom. 11 to Acts 1:6-7).⁴ It's a biblical idea the 11 apostles got from a 40-day course on the kingdom from Jesus, a truth Paul also wrote about in Romans 11. But it's not just about Israel being saved, Paul says, it's also about the fullness of the Gentiles. It's not just for Israel, Jesus says in v. 8 'take this international.' The kingdom He's been teaching on for 40 days, *the timing* of its future and final form is not for them to know, what they need to know is *the task* of the kingdom for now is to be their focus. And it goes far beyond just one nation -- it's to be witnesses to all nations on earth. God the Father has set the times of the end times in place, that's His job, our job: 'be witnesses till the end.'

As for *the timing* of the end times, Jesus says leave that to the Father, but *the task* is to witness to our nation and to all the nations till the end of time. Not to focus on Palestine or politics or prophetic speculation or prejudicial self-focus (as some Jews in NT times did). We're not to be purpose-driven or program-driven or even people-driven, making church services driven by preferences. A church's mission isn't about personal fulfillment, practicing social justice, nor is our mission poor people being made less poor. Jesus didn't give us a mission to end poverty or AIDS. Christians can work in these areas, but our mission is to be witnessing in our area and every area.

Our mission isn't just to care and do good things, it's to share good news. Our goal isn't to help good causes, it's to proclaim the good news. We're not to be spectators or just gospel supporters, we're to be gospel spreaders. v. 8 isn't 'be supporting others in gospel work,' it's 'be gospel witnesses.' The root word for "witness" was used most often for giving testimony. It's a term from ancient law, "2 or 3 witnesses" who testify what they've seen and heard. It was used for bearing witness, how we're not to bear false witness, and how we're to give a true witness and tell our testimony before others, as you'll get to hear next Sunday afternoon from those being baptized. Some people might say 'I like to just be a witness by how I live my life, not saying anything about Christ.' But that's not what this word means. We're witnesses for Christ, meaning we tell what we've seen, heard, and know about Christ. Some say, 'I don't want to offend anyone.' But this word in Acts is used for testifying before offended people. The Greek is *martur* we get martyr from.

To the end of our life to the end of the earth, v. 8 is a never-ending mission. These are the last words of Jesus before He went to heaven, v. 9 says, and what He expects His followers to be doing until He comes back, v. 11 says. We're not to stand around gazing at the sky (or our end times charts), we're not to just wait for the kingdom to come, we're to call people to come to the kingdom now, by putting their faith in Jesus as King. We're not to stay in the upper room like v. 12 mentions or just enjoy our church prayer meetings as v. 14 mentions, or sweet fellowship and worship as chapter 2 describes.

It's great to worship the King as we've done today and we'll sing in our closing hymn that there's something 'sweet' about the 'place with Christ within the doors, where everlasting love displays the choicest of her stores.' But our worship can't be complete or completely healthy if we don't long to see others experience that sweet fellowship and worship and if we don't try to witness to others about it and call them to the feast, as that hymn says.

This first point I've worded as application, but let's apply this a little further: How are you doing with your mission? When was the last time you tried to explain the good news to someone, or to try to steer the conversation toward spiritual things with a non-believer, hoping to try to make the gospel clear? Before we go across the ocean, how are we doing going across the street?

If this is our mission and main task till Jesus returns, how are doing in local outreach? Is there a co-worker or neighbor or unsaved person in your life on your heart you've tried to share with this year? A good test is do you ask for prayer for that person, or do you pray for opportunities to witness to them? A question I've asked myself and would ask you to consider later today and this week is what are you doing to be a witness, and what more can you do?

[talk about Mission and Outreach Team, give ideas to JP or Mark]

Our Mission (point #1) is “be witnesses,” now point #2, Our Message

Look at Acts 2:32 and I want to trace this word "witness" though in Acts so we can see what the message was of their witness of their resurrected Lord.

Acts 2:32 ***This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.***

³³ *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. [so they witnessed about Jesus as being risen, and others could witness (see and hear) God's Spirit alive in them. We're also to be witnesses of that, others should see Him alive in us]*

⁴⁰ *And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them ... [he was calling them here to be saved, and continuing to challenge them]*

Look at Acts 3:15 for the next time the word witness is used: *you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.*

Acts 4:33 *And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

Acts 5:30 *The God of our fathers raised Jesus ... [and v. 32 says] And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given*

...

2 key words stand out in the witness we see in Acts that don't always stand out in modern witnessing: resurrection and repentance. I had the privilege to share the good news with someone this week and I consciously included the resurrection, but honestly I've probably failed more often to say 'He is risen.'

We talk about Jesus dying for sin, but we don't talk enough about Jesus as the risen living Savior at the Father's right hand giving us His life through His Spirit. We're to 'crown Him the Lord of life who triumphed over the grave and rose victorious,' as the hymn says. He is risen! He is risen indeed! Don't just assume that fact when you talk to people, and don't leave Jesus in the ground by just talking about His death, talk about His life for us. Jesus lived for us the life we could not live, and He lives in heaven now for us at the right hand of the Father, before the throne of God above, He intercedes. If He is not risen, we have no hope (1 Cor 15) and no power for life (Phil 3)

But because He is risen indeed, there is hope for life and eternal life in Him. If you look at Acts 4:8 the power of the resurrection of Christ is what Peter bears witness to: *Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, **whom God raised from the dead--by him this man is standing before you well ...** [i.e., it's not about us, it's the risen Christ]...¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

Our message is that there's only one name in the universe, the name of the One risen from the dead, the name of Jesus is the only way to be saved. It's the only name under heaven that can make your name welcome in heaven. One of our young people was wearing a T-shirt at Costco with icons of the world religions on it (crescent for Islam, etc.), and one of the vendors said "hey, I like your T-shirt how it has all the symbols of the different religions together" and then she said "wait, what does it say? At the name of Jesus Every knee will bow and confess Jesus is Lord? Ooh!" She got the message.

That's our witness, that's our message, as offensive and intolerant as it may sound, we can't soften it or it loses its gospel power. There is only one name that can save. There aren't multiple names for God or multiple ways to get to God. Religion can't save. No dead person can get you to God, whether Muhammad or Mary. Good works aren't the way to the Father. Jesus said "I am the door" and "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one gets to the Father but through me." Our message is a very exclusive one-name one-way road with a narrow gate, but it's not unloving, the One Lord offers you life! Look at 3:19: *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ..."*

This is what His love offers, forgiveness of sins and times of refreshing. He offers soul-refreshing abundant life from His presence and in His presence. This takes us to the 2nd key word, not just resurrection, but repentance. To repent in v. 19 is to turn back from our sins, to *turn to God* as one version says it, or to *return* as another has it, or to *be converted* is one translation. Repentance doesn't just confess our sin, it confesses Jesus is the risen Lord. Salvation requires both the resurrection and man's repentance or confession.

[when you share, don't leave out repentance or the resurrection]

Romans 10:9 "*if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*" [again the resurrection, the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead, is as essential to salvation as it is to confess Jesus is Lord, which is also tied to that fact]

In Acts 2 Peter says the fact that Jesus is risen and reigning at the right hand of God proves He is Lord and Messiah: 2:32 *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ...* ³⁶ *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus ..."*

He is Lord, as the song says, He is Lord, He is risen from the dead and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.' If we really believe that last day is coming that will affect and move us to urge people before it's too late to bow now, repent, confess His is Lord

[like our banners Lord Jesus, Has Risen, Now Reigns, Will Return]

Repentance isn't just a change of mind, it's a changed heart, changed action. Acts 2:38 says "*Repent and be baptized...*" John the Baptist called for those he baptized to "*bear fruit in keeping with repentance*" (Mt 3:8). Repentance has the core meaning of change (heart, life, direction, etc.) and true change will show up in our life. It's not a mere work we do, it's something God does

This takes us from our mission, our message to #3. Our might (or power)

There's 3 mighty realities in Acts that empower our witness to bear fruit: the sovereign grace of God, the Spirit of God, our supplication (prayer) to God.

First, the sovereign grace of God [i.e., not what we do it's what God does]

I would probably never sleep if I thought saving people was up to me in my power of persuasion. I can't save anyone but God can and God uses fearful unable people like me?! The end of v. 39 says this promise of forgiveness and God's Spirit "*is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.*" This is God's side of repentance in v. 38, all the Lord calls to Himself, i.e., a sovereign calling or drawing of sinners, all the Lord calls to Himself will receive saving grace.

The human side in Acts 2:21 is that all who call on the Lord shall be saved. His Lordship is something you must call upon and confess to be saved. For some in this room, you may believe Jesus lived and died and rose, but until you bow to Jesus as Lord and cry out to Him as Lord and as your only hope, you are not saved. But if you will repent today and recognize Jesus is Lord, and trust Him alone, in His life, death, and resurrection, you can be saved.

Now turn to Acts 5:30 to see even this repentance is not something we just conjure up by our own willpower. Repentance is a gift of sovereign grace. 5:30 *The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.* ³¹ *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance ...* [repentance is something Jesus gives us, not our gift to Jesus]

Look at Acts 11 for another example of how people repent and receive life. Peter is telling the Jews about Gentiles trusting in Jesus. Acts 11:18 *When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."*

God grants repentance that leads to life. God gives repentance. When you hear of someone truly repenting, converting to Christ, Jew or Gentile, you can say with the apostles *God gave/granted repentance, called to Himself.* Acts 3:16 says even faith *comes through Jesus* (it's all a gift in Eph 2:8-9). Turn to Acts 13 to see God ordains or appoints those who believe in Jesus. 13:48 *when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

Notice the word order. They were preaching to Gentiles and not all believed but *as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.* All those appointed believed. KJV: *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* It's not *as many as believed, God therefore ordained or appointed them to salvation,* no, in the grammar it's God appointed/ordained life therefore they believed.

Turn to Acts 16 to see how this happens and how it encourages our witness. Acts 16:14 *One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to*** [or "respond"] *what was said by Paul.*

Lydia responded in faith because the Lord opened her heart to respond. All God has appointed will believe, that encourages and empowers my witness. Knowing there's elect in every nation drove Pearce, Carey, modern missions

In Acts 18:9 I like how the NKJV wording brings out how God has people in every people group and how that encourages and empowers witness. 18:9 *'Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."¹¹ And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God.'* Paul's knowing God had people He would save there was the power Paul needed to overcome fears and temptations not to speak, and for some of us who are afraid or are tempted to keep silent, we need to trust God has His elect in our city, too.

[God has them in the workplace, the park, etc., and wants to use you, too]

A 2nd related reality to empower witness is: supplication (prayer) to God

Turn to Acts 4 and this could be its own sermon but for time just notice this text. In Acts 4:24 it says the church *'lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them...[look at v. 27 for how God's sovereignty drove prayer which empowered their witness] ... for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness*

Sovereignty of grace, supplication for grace, and lastly the Spirit of grace is what empowers our witness. If we lack boldness to witness, let's pray for it in light of God's predestined plan and mighty hand to strengthen our hands, and plead for His Spirit to help us. We started in 1:8 *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses ...*

The Acts 1 power is the gospel in Spirit-filled servants devoted to the power of prayer, as 1:14 says *'All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer...'* The power of God came through the Spirit of God filling the people of God as they prayed and proclaimed the gospel of God. We also have the same power source, God's Spirit in us, prayer, the gospel. If we listen to our fears or excuses or lean on anything else, we won't be good witnesses. But if we love the lost and lift up the gospel with God's Spirit, if we pray powerfully fervently like v. 14 ... who can tell what God might do!

If you want to apply those ideas further you can listen to a message by my dad on the church website on "divine appointments." God's sovereignty in all things should never make us apathetic, it should make us encouraged to know God is up to something and that God uses people like us to call others to Himself. My dad has more of a gift in evangelism than I do, a few weeks back after church he's on the phone with a guy repairing his computer and he asks my dad how his day has been and my dad starts telling him about the great gospel message! You can do the same with people who ask you how your weekend was! Tell them what you enjoyed at church, the gospel.

I remember when I worked in the insurance industry and I would pray for witnessing opportunities and as I would read my Bible outside sometimes it would happen as I looked for it, people would come up, a co-worker asked a verse on her In-N-Out cup, another across the floor once said 'hey, you're religious, what do you think?' My point is we don't need a program, but we may need prayer and being aware of who God sovereignly puts in our path.

Talk with your family on your way home or in family worship this week as you pray about how you might reach out to others. In our old neighborhood my kids said, 'hey, why don't we go around and give a card with a picture we drew to our neighbors and put a Bible verse on it?' My young son when I was talking about how we need to be good witnesses and not yell at each other, etc., he said 'hey, I know, we can ask people do they know Jesus?' We adults sometimes make it more complicated, but a child can get Acts 1, v. 8.

As we pray for God's help to apply all this, make our closing hymn a prayer

While all our hearts and all our songs Join to admire the feast,
 Each of us cries, with thankful tongues, "Lord, why was I a guest?"
 "Why was I made to hear Thy voice, And enter while there's room,
 When thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?"
 'Twas the same love that spread the feast That sweetly forced us in;
 Else we had still refused to taste, And perished in our sin.
 Pity the nations, O our God, Constrain the earth to come;
 Send Thy victorious word abroad, And bring the strangers home.

And all God's witnesses said ...

¹ Michael Haykin, "A Mind Wholly Given Up to God: The Piety of Samuel Pearce," notes from Reformed Baptist Seminary module at Immanuel Baptist Church, Sacramento.

² <http://www.andrewfullercenter.org/files/being-baptist-and-being-calvinist.pdf>

³ Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Exposition of Romans 11*, p. 220, 194, citing Zech 12:10, Isa 27:9, 59:20-21, Jer 31:31-34, Ps 14:7, as connected to Rom 11:25 and following.

⁴ Increase Mather said on Acts 1:6-7 "Christ did never absolutely deny His having such a visible glorious kingdom upon earth as that which His disciples looked for; only He corrected their error as to the time of this kingdom appearing. Christ did not say to them that there never should be any such restoration of the kingdom to Israel as their thoughts were running upon; only He telleth them the times and seasons were not for them to know; thereby acknowledging that such a kingdom should indeed be, as they did from the holy prophets expect. Herein was their error,—not in expecting a glorious appearance of the kingdom of God, but in that they made account that this would be immediately." —*The Mysteries of Israel's Salvation*: by Dr. Increase Mather. 1669. p. 130.
See also <http://thecripplegate.com/church-history-and-israels-future/>