

Acts 1:8 Reconsidered: A Stub Track, a Siding, or a Main Track?

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Introduction

Three options exist for interpreting Jesus' refusal to answer the eleven's question. Three types of track that railroads use illustrate:

1. The stub track: a dead-end track for long-term parking of railroad cars,
2. The siding: a track for a train lacking right-of-way to wait while one with the right of way passes in the opposite direction,
3. Main track: The track used by trains as they head toward the destination.

Non-Dispensationalists: Acts 1:8 as a Stub Track

Non-dispensationalists reject any restored kingdom to Israel. If the disciples' expectation that Jesus might then restore the kingdom were correct, these theologians would need to abandon their model. Thus, non-dispensationalists strive to see verse 7 as: "Don't ask when the kingdom will be restored," and verse 8 as: "Instead (*alla*), you will be My witnesses for the spiritual kingdom (which replaces the nonsense of a restored kingdom to Israel)."

However, if the disciples were utterly confused, needing such a sharp rebuke, why would Luke even include vv 6-7? See how easily the text would read, if vv 6-7 were omitted.

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. . . ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. ⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Response (from Ascension Narratives) to the Stub-Track View: A Preliminary Response

In Luke 24:45 Jesus had *opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures*. Both John the Baptist (Mat 3:2) and Jesus (Mat 4:17) had preached: *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.

Traditionally, Dispensationalists View Acts 1:8 as a Siding

The New Scofield Bible says about Acts 1:7, "Observe that the Lord did not rebuke them for their inquiry about the restoration of the kingdom. Their question was a valid one. But His answer was in accord with His repeated teaching: the time is God's secret (Mt. 24:36, 42,44; 25:13; cp. 1 Th. 5:1)." ¹

¹*New Scofield Reference Bible*, new ed. Ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, *et al.* (New York: Oxford, 1967), 1160. Cf. *Scofield Reference Bible*. Ed. C. I. Scofield (New York: Oxford, 1909), 1147.

