

Lesson 28  
**The Kingdom in The  
Book of Acts  
Part I**

On the very day of the ascension of Jesus into heaven His disciples asked Him when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. What would a restored Kingdom look like to them? What would they have been expecting to see?

**I. Introduction**

- a. Like the Gospels which precede it, the Book of Acts consists primarily of history. It is evident from its opening words that the historical events to be recounted are not only closely connected with the preceding events; they are a **continuation** of them. Acts 1:1 *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, KJV*
- b. Therefore, in the period covered by Acts, we should **expect** the themes and emphasis originating in the gospel accounts of our Lord's ministry to continue. Since He taught the Kingdom and His Messiahship, Acts should also continue those themes.
- c. However, that is not what we see. Instead, we see the theme of the **Church** emerging as the centerpiece of the Apostolic Christian message from just shortly after the Day of Pentecost onward. Acts 2:47 *And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. KJV*
- d. Since the Church in and of itself is not directly analogous to the **entire concept** of the Kingdom of God, but only reflects one aspect of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth, what we see is a shifting emphasis.
- e. The Church and the Kingdom are related terms, but, Kingdom teaching recedes into the background and becomes **exclusively** eschatological as presented in the remainder of the New Testament, while the Church, as a theme, takes center stage.
- f. The Book of Acts, then, is a transitional book in which the focus shifts in many ways from the Jews to the Gentiles but that is not to be taken as God's rejection of Israel, but rather as evidence that He has begun a different **phase** in His redemptive plan.
- g. What the remainder of the New Testament reveals about the Kingdom of God is that its **full** manifestation can only be understood within the context of future and last things, as our final phase of this study will clearly demonstrate.

**II. Post Resurrection Period**

- a. The post resurrection period of Jesus' teaching ministry is detailed in **parallel** passages found in Matt 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21 and Acts 1:1-11.
- b. After His resurrection, for a period of **forty** days our Lord continued with the disciples instructing them about the things of the Kingdom. Acts 1:3 *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: KJV*
- c. What the disciples had failed to grasp is the necessity of Christ's suffering and death in the **redemption** of Israel. They could not harmonize Calvary with their hopes of the Mediatorial Kingdom of Messiah. Luke 24:21 *but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. NIV*
- d. During this period of time Christ demonstrated to them the reality of His resurrection from the dead by His physical presence with them along with many other **infallible proofs**. John 20:30-31 *And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. KJV*
- e. In His 40 days of teaching, Jesus solves the mystery concerning His suffering and death and links it to His heavenly **glory** by expositing the OT references to the disciples. Luke 24:25-26 *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? KJV Luke 24:45-46 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: KJV*
- f. Thus, having informed them concerning the "things pertaining to the kingdom", Christ then **commissioned** them to a definite program of action to be followed by His disciples during the interregnum until He returns to establish the Kingdom. Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. KJV*
- g. The various NT commissioning passages (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15-20; Matt 28:19-20; John 21:15-17) do not contain anything inconsistent with Christ's previous preaching. However, they add the element of going out to **all nations**.
- h. At the end of the 40 day period of instruction the disciples have one lingering question about the establishment of the Kingdom: **When** will this be? Acts 1:6 *So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" NIV*

**III. The Question of "When?"**

- a. The question assumes the restoration of a divine kingdom which **once existed**. The Greek word means to restore something to its former place or state. This can only refer to the Theocratic Kingdom which was established at Sinai.
- b. This Kingdom was an organized government on earth in which the nation of Israel held the central and sovereign place under God. Hence, it is reasonable to presume that such a Kingdom should be **restored**.
- c. The tense of the verb is **futuristic** present indicating an expectation as yet unrealized. The Kingdom was not then established on earth. This accords with the previous statements of Jesus before the cross. Luke 22:30 *so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. NIV*
- d. The Israel referenced in the question was a literal and historical nation in existence which was at that time oppressed under the heavy yoke of Rome. This is not a reference to a **"spiritual"** people.

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- e. The clause “at this time” clearly shows they lacked information on that aspect and that they had every reason to believe that such an occurrence was **imminent**.

**IV. Christ’s Reply to the Disciples’ Question**

- a. In Christ’s response there is no rebuke or correction for their general **assumptions**.
- b. If their ideas of the Kingdom had been totally **wrong**, certainly this was the place for Christ to have set them right, not just for their sakes, but for ours as well who would be readers of the sacred text for centuries to come. Acts 1:7-8 *He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” NIV*
- c. If because of Israel’s sins and rejection of Messiah, God was now done forever with the historical nation of Israel; if all her divine covenants were now taken away and given to the Church, this would be the place to **say so**.
- d. If the throne of David was now to be **transferred** from earth to heaven and if the glorious utterances of the OT prophets relating to the future Kingdom had only been beautiful dreams (as some assert) this would have been the place to say so.
- e. If there would never be an earthly reign of Messiah in which wars, famines, pestilence and injustice would be abolished, it would have been simple for Jesus to say so and would have **ended** all subsequent speculation which has gone on for the past 2000 years.
- f. But Jesus said none of these things. Jesus rather confirmed their expectation by declaring that the Father had fixed the times. The times could not be fixed by the Father for something that is merely **imaginary** on the part of the disciples.
- g. The question of the disciples was not “if”, but “when.” Jesus had **previously** instructed them that such a Kingdom would be set up in the future; that the time was unrevealed to them; and that their future was in the Father’s hands.
- h. The closing event of Christ’s 40 days of ministry provides both a proof and a promise of a **second advent**. Acts 1:10-11 *They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” NIV*
1. The angelic messengers speak to the certainty and the **tangible** reality or proof of Christ’s return: “This same Jesus”
  2. The purpose of the return was understood and consistent with OT prophecy in Daniel and the clear statements of Jesus before the **high priest**. Matt 26:64 *Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. KJV*

**V. The Day of Pentecost and the Kingdom**

- a. The day of Pentecost was a Jewish feast, one of **three** great annual festivals at which every male’s attendance was required by Law. Ex 23:14-17 *Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. 15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) 16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. 17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God. KJV*
- b. According to Jewish tradition, Pentecost commemorates the very day that the Law was given and the Theocratic Kingdom was established. The Pentecostal Feast pointed to the ingathering of the **first fruits** 1 Cor 15:23 *Christ the firstfruit; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. KJV*
- c. The purpose of the gift of tongues was to bear a certain testimony to the **nation** of Israel. Israelites from all parts of the known world would have been assembled there for the Passover and would have remained in Jerusalem for Pentecost.
- d. Therefore, that day offered an unparalleled opportunity for presenting the facts concerning Jesus in His relation to the Kingdom of God to an audience which would carry the report to **all areas** of the ancient world where Jews were living. Rom 10:18 *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. KJV*
- e. Peter, speaking to the Israelites who had put Christ to death, repeats the original claims of the Lord, namely, that the source of the Lord’s miracle working **power** was in God. Acts 2:22 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: KJV*
- f. Peter goes on to say that rather than occupying the Davidic throne in Jerusalem, Christ ascended to a heavenly **throne** until His foes are brought under subjection by the coming of His Kingdom. Acts 2:33-35 *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. KJV*
- g. Upon hearing that the Holy Spirit convinced **3000** of his hearers of the truth of Peter’s words and they changed their minds about Jesus and confessed Him to be the crucified, risen, ascended and the coming King, the Messiah of God. Acts 2:41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. KJV*

**VI. Application**

- a. We have two essential methods for representing the Kingdom of Christ to the world around us: 1.) Our words-who we tell and what we tell them; and, 2.) Our lives-what we live before others.
- b. In your assessment of yourself, how well are you representing the Kingdom to others and before others?
- c. What needs to change in the way you are representing the Kingdom to others?