

## Episode #1119 Acts 2 Part 8-Acts 2 and the Kingdom of God

I. Acts is unique in the New Testament. Rather than the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, it focuses on what came after, when the Lord had ascended back into heaven. The Lord left His disciples with many commands to carry out, and Acts tells us how they did them.

### II. Acts 2 and the Kingdom of God.

- A. It is the belief of many Bible expositors that the events recorded in Acts 2 mark the beginning of the work of God today, and the “birthday of the church.” I do not believe that this is the case.
- B. Acts 2:1-4:
  - 1. The “one place” was the temple. Luke 24:52-53.
  - 2. The Day of Pentecost was the Feast of Weeks. Leviticus 23:15-21.
- C. This event is very Jewish in character. But if these things do not mark the beginning of the church, then what did begin here?
- D. The Kingdom of God.
  - 1. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God constantly announces and confirms that He has great plans for the future, not just for mankind and for the people living upon the earth, but for this earth itself.
  - 2. Genesis 3:15. Satan’s “head” here symbolizes the very source of his power and influence. This Seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He will crush Satan’s power at its very source. When He does this, this will usher in the time period that is called in the New Testament the “kingdom of God.”
  - 3. This kingdom is nothing less than the government of God upon the earth. Isaiah 26:9. Psalm 86:9. Psalm 47:7-8. Psalm 22:28. Psalm 9:8. Psalm 96:10.
  - 4. The kingdom is the concept that John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ were setting forth when they came declaring the kingdom of God. Paul taught the same thing, as we can see in Acts 17:31.
  - 5. What we see happening during the events at Pentecost in Acts 2 is the very beginning of that kingdom. These events at Acts 2 mark nothing less than the start of the government of God upon earth.
- E. The Kingdom in Part.
  - 1. God did not take control of the world and begin to rule it all through His government at that time. But the Lord Jesus Christ Himself revealed that this kingdom would come in gradually in Mark 4:26-29. In this passage, the Lord compares the arrival of the coming kingdom of God to the stages of growing grain. The kingdom of God will come this way. That is, it will not come all at once, taking over the world in an instant. Rather, it grows and spreads, becoming more and more distinct, until finally the entire world is under its control. In the Acts period, what we see is the first stages of the kingdom of God coming to pass, just like the first stages of growing grain. The seed was planted by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At Pentecost, that seed sprouted, and throughout the Acts period it was growing. The kingdom was not yet fully there. There was no full grain in the head. Yet it was in the earth and growing all the same.
  - 2. Another way to look at the Acts period is as the kingdom “in part.” I Corinthians 13:9-10. The Acts period displayed all the major qualities of the

kingdom, yet they were there only in part. There was the healing and health that will be experienced in the kingdom, the judgment, and the God-given direction, but only in a partial form.

3. Another way to look at the Acts period is as the “night” period of the kingdom of God. Romans 13:12. During its night period, the kingdom was shrouded in darkness. Except to those who believed the gospel being preached by the apostles, it was veiled to men as to what exactly was going on. Yet during the Acts period, the night ran its course. If God had continued His kingdom work, the day would have come, and the full kingdom, though yet unripe, would have taken control of the earth. Yet this did not happen. Acts 28:28. From this point on, the government of God was postponed. The day period of the kingdom, the full manifestation of God’s government, was postponed while God began a new work. That is His present work in grace.

F. Acts 2 and the Beginning of the Kingdom.

1. The first significant factor we notice is a sound. Acts 2:2. A sound begins the future kingdom. I Corinthians 15:51-52. The sound of a trumpet announces the long-promised resurrection. I believe that this is setting forth one of the great events that takes place immediately upon the ending of this current dispensation of grace, and when the kingdom comes once again.
2. Secondly, there was a visible sign of fire. Acts 2:3. There will be miraculous signs when that kingdom comes again, some of them having to do with fire. Acts 2:19-20.
3. These tongues of fire rested on each of the disciples. This marked them out as God’s rulers that He had chosen. In the same way, I believe that men will be marked out by God when the kingdom comes in the future, and one of the ways this marking occurs is by fire. Isaiah 4:4-5. This is related to the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night by which the LORD signified His presence with Israel in the wilderness. Exodus 13:21. Whom God has chosen to lead in His kingdom will be clearly known and understood by a similar sign of fire over their dwelling places.
4. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4. This too will be paralleled in a very real and very miraculous way when the kingdom of God comes at last. Acts 2:17. In that day to come, all flesh, in other words, all people living upon the earth will experience what these men in particular experienced at that time. Isaiah 32:13-15. The sad state of the land of Israel is reversed when “the Spirit is poured upon us from on high.” Psalm 22:27. Things will be imprinted on men’s minds that will cause them to turn to the LORD. John 16:7-11. When the Spirit is poured out on all flesh in the future, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. This will have a great and lasting effect on the world, and will be instrumental in bringing God’s kingdom to earth.
5. They began to speak in other tongues. Acts 2:4. The language barrier was broken down. Acts 2:18. Many gifts will be given by the Spirit.

III. Conclusion. The miraculous events of Pentecost parallel the events that will take place when the full kingdom comes in in the future. The Acts period was actually an early, “night” stage of the kingdom of God. That kingdom has been postponed, however, now that God has revealed

His great purpose to administer His rule over the earth through grace. Acts gives us a foretaste of what the full kingdom will be like once it comes at last.