

The Kingdom Study Lesson 6

The Postponement of the Kingdom

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In the previous lesson we saw that when the Lord Jesus Christ showed up on this earth that both of the kingdoms were present. In regards to the kingdom of Heaven the Jews refused it by rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ a person can now be spiritually born again and enter into the kingdom of God.

In this lesson we are going to look at what if the Jews had accepted Jesus Christ as their king and also how that in the first few chapters of Acts the kingdom of Heaven is offered again to the Jews and they reject it one more time.

What if the Jews had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ would have been crucified either way, remember that it had already been prophesied in places like Psalm 22 that he would be crucified. The problem of man's sin still had to be dealt with and the only way for it to be taken care of was for the Jesus Christ to be crucified in our place. If the Jews had accepted him and tried to make him their king instead of Caesar then the Romans would have crucified him just the same.

Also there is an important prophesy concerning Elijah that would have had to be fulfilled if the Jews had accepted him. The prophesy is found in Malachi 4:5-6 and it says that Elijah will return before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. The disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were expecting him to set up his kingdom when he came the first time and they ask him about this prophesy in Matthew 17:10-13. Jesus answers them by saying that Elijah had already come and the people knew him not. At first they did not understand him and then when they did they realized that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist. Now many will argue and say that John the Baptist said he was not Elijah but in the prophesy concerning the birth of John the Baptist it is said that he would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:13-17). Remember comparing scripture with scripture is the only way to understand the word of God.

The Postponement of the Kingdom :

Before we get into the book of Acts and look at the offering of the kingdom again to the Jews we need to look at a prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke 23:34 at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ Jesus prays and asks the father to forgive them for they know not what they do. The question is did God answer this prayer. I believe he did and this is a large part of why he offers the kingdom to them again in the first part of the Book of Acts.

Acts Chapters 1-16 :

Here we have to be very careful because there are many false doctrines taught from these chapters concerning salvation and the church age. The reason for this is that most people do not even believe that the kingdoms are different let alone that the kingdom of Heaven is being offered to Israel again in the first few chapters of Acts. Also they do not realize that things

progress and change throughout the first part of Acts and doctrine for the church age concerning Gentiles is not totally settled until Acts 15. Therefore we will start and go through this in order to see the kingdom of Heaven offered again to Israel and see them reject it.

Notice that the first thing we see in Acts 1:6-7 is the disciples asking Jesus whether he will restore the kingdom of Heaven to Israel at this time. He tells them it is not for them to know the times and the seasons which the father has put in his power.

In Acts 2 we see that on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were gathered together in one place that they received the Holy Ghost. Later in this chapter we see that Peter preaches a message to the Jews and Jewish converts that we gathered there. Notice that the message is to Jews (verses 14, 22, 36) and he preaching to them that the one they have crucified was the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36). As a result of this they asked the question “what do we do?” (Acts 2:27) This is the same question they asked John the Baptist in Luke 3:12.

Now we know that in Acts 2:38 Peter tells them to “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Many today take this verse and say you have to be baptized in water or you are have not received the Holy Ghost. But the verse is dealing with Jews who have just crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. What Peter is doing is offering them the same baptism that John offered them note that John was baptizing to manifest the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel (John 1:31). Peter is doing the same thing note the whole point of his message in verse 36. The only difference is that now since Jesus Christ has been resurrected and ascended back to heaven a person can now receive the Holy Ghost where they could not during the ministry of John the Baptist. When John the Baptist was preaching the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and now that God is giving Israel another chance at this Kingdom Peter is presenting the baptism that John had presented before because the kingdom of Heaven was at hand again.

In Acts 3:19-21 we see Peter is preaching again the kingdom message. Notice he is preaching about the blotting out of sins and the times of refreshing which is a reference to the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that in Hebrews when the Lord Jesus does return and sets up the new covenant with Israel that their sins will be blotted out. Peter doesn't know that for us today that our sins were blotted out at Calvary (Colossians 2:14) that revelation was given to Paul.

In Acts 4:1-2 we see that Peter is dealing again with the leaders in Israel. Note the reference from Daniel concerning Jesus being the stone set at nought, the head of the corner. Also in Acts 5:31 we see that Peter is still dealing with the leaders in Israel note the reference to Jesus as the Prince this connects him with the Kingdom of Heaven (Isaiah 9:6).

In Acts 7 we see the message that Stephen preached unto the leader of Israel. Note in verse 51 he asks them do ye always resist the Holy Ghost. In verses 54-60 we see the response of Israel they reject him and his message and stone him to death. This will make the 3rd and final time that Israel rejects God. They rejected God the father in 1 Samuel 8:7, they rejected God the Son in John 19:14-15 and now they have rejected God the Holy Ghost here in Acts. Here was there 2nd chance to receive the kingdom and they blew it.

Now we will look closely at the stoning of Stephen to see these things. Notice first that when Stephen is being stoned he said he saw heaven opened (verse 56). In Revelation heaven is opened twice once in **Revelation 4:1** and again in **Revelation 19:11**. One time John goes up and the other time Jesus comes down. Note also that Jesus is said to be standing on the right hand of God. In **Hebrews 1:3** and **10:12** he is seated on the right hand of God. Many preach that Jesus stood to receive Stephen out of honor for his faithfulness but there may be more to it than that. In Isaiah 3:13 the word of God says that the Lord stands to judge his people.

What could have happened is that if Israel had received Stephen message and the offer of the Kingdom of Heaven then the rapture could have taken place right then with all the ones who were saved from the day of Pentecost until right then would have gone up making up the bride of Christ, and the tribulation could have started right then. You say what about the gentiles that are mentioned as being connected with the Kingdom of Heaven (**Matthew 8:10-12**). They would have come in through the tribulation and the millennial reign. Remember that the church age did not have to be, none of the Old Testament prophets foresaw it.

Therefore the Jew have rejected the Kingdom of Heaven again and God sets them aside they are blinded spiritually (**Romans 11:25**) and now he will deal with the Gentiles. At the end of the church age he will rapture all those who have died saved and those that are saved who are still alive and then the tribulation will start and he will deal once again with the Jews.

What about the rest of Acts?

In the very next chapter we see Philip sent to deal with the Ethiopian Eunuch about his salvation. In Acts 9 you see that apostle Paul saved and called into the ministry and remember he is the apostle to the Gentiles. In Acts 10 you see that Peter is shown he can eat things contrary to the Old Testament Law. Also in **Acts 10:34-48** you see Peter preaching to Gentiles and they receive the Holy Ghost. Note in verse 44 that the Gentiles receive the Holy Ghost before they are baptized and therefore **Acts 2:38** does not apply doctrinally from this point on. Remember that the Kingdom has been rejected and God is now dealing with the Gentiles.

In Acts 15 we see that they get the doctrine straight for the church age straight, and note that in **Acts 16:30-31** when Paul is asked by the Philippian Jailor “what must I do to be saved” he is told, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ , and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

So now will live in the church age where the only Kingdom that is present is the Kingdom of God. We get into it by grace through faith believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting in his shed blood to atone for our sins. The Kingdom of Heaven has been postponed and will come back to the earth the when the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

The Kingdom Study Lesson 6 : Handout

The Postponement of the Kingdom

- 1) If the Jews had accepted Jesus as their King who would have fulfilled the prophesy of Elijah?

- 2) Why is Jesus' prayer in Luke 23:34 so Important?

- 3) What happened in Acts concerning the Kingdom of Heaven?

- 4) What is Acts 2:38 all about really?

- 5) What is significant about the rejecting of Stephen's message?

- 6) Why is the fact that Jesus is standing so important in Acts 7:55?

- 7) What is the result of Israel rejecting the Holy Spirit in Acts 7:51?