

## **Verse-by-Verse: The Book of Acts**

### **Study Notes**

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#### **Acts 1:4-8**

#### **Two Comings of Christ – One Kingdom of God:**

The revelation of the Kingdom of God in the two comings of Christ: One manifestation was with Christ's incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection. The next manifestation will be with his Second Coming – which theologians capture by the word "Parousia".

An obvious time-gap: Currently, Christ's followers are living in an age we might call the "spiritual kingdom of God". The apostles insist a day is coming when the Kingdom of God will be physically present.

#### **Jesus' Final Directions: Acts 1:4-8**

The context: Jesus gave these instructions while he was eating with his disciples: See: Luke 24:40-43

Jesus appears to his disciples and commences to prove he is real – and not a spirit. Even though they see the wounds in his hands and feet, he further convinces them by eating a piece of broiled fish.

Although Jesus has received his new resurrected body, he still eats with the disciples. Although he does not need food for sustenance, it does not prevent him from eating. (A corollary: See Revelation 19:6)

- "Clothed With Power":

Jesus reminds the apostles that they are not to leave Jerusalem until they are "clothed with power from on high". Synonyms for the same experience repeated in Acts:

- Acts 2:4 – “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...”
- Acts 2:38 – “You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 4:31 – “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit...”
- Acts 8:17 – “They received the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 9:17 – “...that you ... may be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 11:15 - “The Holy Spirit came on them...”
- Acts 19:6 – “... The Holy Spirit came on them...”

In John 16:12-15 Jesus has already indicated an unusual “coming” of the Holy Spirit:

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

John the Baptist knew about this promise: Luke 3:16 - “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I ... will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” - Luke 3:16

- **The Larger Context:**

The promise of a spiritual baptism does not stand alone. It is tied to something much larger that the Father has planned – an emergence of a new era of the Kingdom of God.

Part of the Old Testament prophecies was the prediction that God's end-time plan would include a widespread outpouring of the Holy Spirit. John's baptism pointed to this: He spoke of a spiritual baptism and a coming judgement.

The apostles were keenly interested in these things. That becomes evident from their conversations with Jesus during the 40-day interval

between his resurrection and ascension. They wanted to know when these things would take place.

The apostles anticipated the restoration of Israel as a part of God's end-time kingdom. In Mark 10:35–45, James and John asked Jesus, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

Now that Jesus' suffering is past he's telling them about the Spirit being poured out as an indication that the new age was commencing. So it is only natural that they want to know if this will include the restoration of Israel as an independent nation, something they have not experienced since the Roman occupation began in 63 B.C.

Acts 1:6-8: "So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 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."

Jesus did not give the apostles a direct "No" when they asked about Israel's restoration. Instead, he made it clear that the "times or dates" had been set by the Father's own authority.

Now that's important because they asked him, "Are **you** at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He's making it clear that these things are not even part of his own authority.

Let me give you a couple of examples of this. In Mark 13:32 Jesus tells the disciples that the knowledge of the day and hour of his Soon Return was only known by the Father. See: I Corinthians 15:54

Two things emerging from this context: 1. The restoration of Israel was still a future event. 2. The apostles' overriding concern was to proclaim the Good News.

Jesus promises them an empowerment for the task at hand he says,

“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.” – Acts 1:8

They are to experience what Jesus underwent at the beginning of his Messianic ministry. As Matthew records it ...

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.” - Matthew 3:16- 4:1

Just as the Holy Spirit was the source of Jesus' ministry to the world, he would be the apostles' source. While Jesus' ministry primarily extended to Israel's borders, the apostles would be called to take the gospel to the known world of their day. The scope of outreach would be greater, but the source would be the same.

**Next time**, we will continue by looking at Jesus' Ascension in Acts 1:9-11