

Acts Chapter 2 Con't

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[0 : 00] We are in Acts chapter 2, concluding the chapter, very close to concluding it. And we see that they are implementing, in anticipation of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven come to earth, they are implementing some of the characteristics that will be found in that kingdom.

One of those characteristics, and there are many, we'll not take time to try and elaborate as to what all this means, but when Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning on this earth, justice will prevail, and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth like the waters cover the seas.

We are not there now. We've got a lot of injustice to deal with on almost every hand. But when that time comes, the kingdom of heaven will have been answered in the prayer.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is not now being realized.

But when Christ returns and establishes his kingdom, that will be realized. And peace and justice will prevail throughout the whole earth. When Christ came, this kingdom was announced as being at hand.

[1 : 22] John the baptizer made that his principal message. And he delivered it to the nation of Israel because it was to Israel that the promised Messiah was to come.

He was to come to Israel for the whole world. And Israel was to be the leadership nation or the spearhead or the vanguard for all the other nations.

Israel, as it turned out, was uncooperative. The time will come when they will be cooperative. So when Christ came, he announced the kingdom at hand. He never actually offered or brought in the kingdom.

And one reason was because the kingdom of heaven come to earth cannot be established until two things happen. Number one, the Messiah, the Son of God, had to die and pay the penalty for human sin, thus giving God the legal, righteous basis for reversing the curse that was pronounced upon the earth.

Christ came and did that. In his death, burial, and resurrection, he succeeded in removing Adam's transgression so that each of us becomes individually responsible to God for our actions.

[2 : 50] No longer can anybody blame Adam for our sin. We have to take personal responsibility. Second thing that has to be accomplished is that Israel as a nation has to get on board and accept Jesus as their Messiah.

And we'll see this coming up in chapter 3 very shortly. And it is as crystal clear as anything could be. And I am amazed at how many still miss it.

And that is, when Israel, as a nation, embraces Jesus Christ as their Messiah, then that kingdom will be erected.

So, God has made himself, if you will, subservient to the fulfillment of his own promises. And one of those promises was to Israel, but Israel is now in rejection and unbelief.

The time is coming when that will be reversed. So, when Christ died on that cross, many people, particularly in Christendom, and I'm talking about Catholicism and Protestantism and just about anything else having to do with Christendom, most of them came to the conclusion that when Israel crucified their Messiah, that was it.

[4 : 10] That meant that God was finished with Israel. That was Israel's final answer. No, it wasn't. Israel's final answer is still coming.

When Christ died on that cross, one of the things he said was, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Who was he talking about? He was talking about the leadership of the nation of Israel, the shakers and movers who were responsible for handing him over to the Romans and for his crucifixion.

Do you think that that prayer of Christ on the cross for God to forgive his killers was answered? I think it was.

Can you conceive of God the Son offering a prayer request to his Father and it not being granted? I think it was. I think they were forgiven.

[5 : 11] And because they were forgiven, the opportunity and the offer of Israel accepting the kingdom after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was very, very real.

In other words, for Israel, the crucifixion did not take them out of the picture. God's forgiveness was there after the crucifixion.

They still had another opportunity. And in chapter 3, we will see what they made of it. So this is really important. Now, with their anticipating the arrival of the kingdom of heaven come to earth, these people were serious about getting with the program.

One of the things that the program included was, there won't be any more poverty. There won't be any more deprivation. There won't be any more starvation.

There won't be any more injustices like this. There will be a God-ordained equity throughout the whole earth.

[6 : 21] Now, this is something that man is trying to establish now. And the 80-year failed experiment in the Soviet Union proved that it just could not be done.

Someone said communism in the Soviet Union simply meant that everyone was equal, except some were more equal than others.

And that's the way it works. Because when man tries to impose equality, it flops. And the reason it does is because of the fallenness of human nature.

We have a greed gene built into us. We all do. It's part of our psyche. It's part of our makeup. We are self-centered automatically.

And we want to serve self. And that's why communism, for instance, sounds great as a philosophy and on paper. But when you try to make it work, it just falls apart.

[7 : 25] It can't work because people are needed to implement it and people are fallen. So it failed in the Soviet Union and it's failing in Cuba miserably and it's failing everywhere because it simply is not workable.

Communism begins with the basic premise, there is no God. Therefore, man is perfectible and he is in one of the higher rungs on the evolutionary ladder and he is getting closer and closer to perfection.

Well, anybody who is a student of history knows that that is just patent nonsense. There's no truth in it at all. But when Christ was presented and the kingdom of heaven was announced as being at hand, that means it's right around the corner.

It doesn't mean it's here. But when Jesus was here, he did in his own person contain kingdom conditions.

And he gave everybody in Israel a foretaste of what that was going to be like. How did he do that? He did that by demonstrating kingdom power over illness.

[8 : 41] He raised the sick off their sickbed. He gave sight to the blind. He caused cripples to walk. He even raised the dead because those are the conditions that are going to prevail when the kingdom of heaven is established on the earth.

It never has been, but it will one day. And those things will be a reality. So Jesus said, If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come among you.

And later he said, The kingdom of God is among you. How so? In his person.

In his person. One translation renders this, The kingdom of God is within you. Terribly poor translation, because it has caused some people to believe that the kingdom of heaven resides within each individual.

That's not the meaning. When Jesus said, The kingdom of heaven is among you. That's the way it ought to be translated. And it was in his own person. So everywhere he went, he brought with him kingdom conditions.

[9 : 59] And if he is going to present himself as the Messiah of Israel, God's super fix it man, who's going to right all of the wrongs in the world, if he's going to present himself that way, he has to have some credentials.

Why should anybody believe him? Why should anybody trust him? Just because he says he is the king of the kingdom doesn't make him that. So his qualifications were found in his miracles.

And they authenticated that he was who he claimed to be. And he was who John the Baptist said he was. And his miracles were his calling card. That being the case, many of these Jews understood these kingdom promises and what was going to take place.

And here in our text, in Acts chapter 2, the passage is talking about communism. It is a biblical communism, radically different from that which has been instituted by men in the 19th century.

And we read in verse 44, that all that believed were together and had all things common and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need.

[11 : 21] Why did they do that? Why did they do that? Well, they were just feeling so warm hearted and so generous that they just took all of their personal possessions and said, eh, this stuff doesn't belong to me.

It belongs to everybody. So let's throw it all in a common pot and let everybody take whatever they need. That's what they did. Why don't you do that?

Now, here's my point. If this in Acts chapter 2, if this is, as the vast majority of Christians say, if this is the beginning of the church, then this ought to be our modus operandi.

This ought to be what we're doing. You ought to bring the deeds to your houses and the titles to your car and bring them to my church.

Okay? And give them all to me. And I and the elders will decide who gets what and we'll give you it all up so it'll all be fair.

[12 : 32] Now, when are you going to do that? When are you going to do that? And why aren't you going to do that? And many look at this and say, well, it doesn't mean that literally. It just means that's that's the spirit of the thing.

You're supposed to catch the spirit of it. Well, how are you going to feed people off of the spirit? They were doing something because this is part and parcel of the kingdom.

But fellas, what I'm saying is we are not now in it. And we never have been. That kingdom never has come to pass. It will one day. But this isn't it.

What we are in right now is called the church age. The dispensation of the grace of God. This is not to be confused with kingdom stuff.

So, what we have here in Acts, and listen, I'm not saying these people were wrong. No, no. I'm not saying they were wrong. They were acting in good faith based on what they knew and understood at the time.

[13 : 35] And they were filled with the Holy Spirit. These were godly people. They weren't mistaken. Their heart was in this.

They were doing what they were convinced they ought to be doing. And all that believed were together and had all things common. They sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need.

Remember, in Matthew 19, when Jesus was confronted by the rich young ruler, this is a parallel passage.

Well, not a parallel, but it's an explanatory passage. And the only way we can understand this is by comparing Scripture with Scripture, which is what we're supposed to do.

But in Matthew 19, this rich young ruler, you'll recall, came to Jesus and said, good master, what must I do to have eternal life? And even there, and I don't want to stop here, but I just want to say this.

[14 : 36] His concept of eternal life then, during the earthly life of Christ, was different from our concept of eternal life. Now, he was looking at it from a Jewish perspective.

Jews, in the Old Testament, never thought of themselves as dying and going to heaven where God is. That was never the Jewish concept. That's our concept today as believers in Christ, absent from the body, present with the Lord at death.

That wasn't the way it was in the Old Testament nor in the Gospels. And having eternal life meant to the Jew being resurrected at the last day and having a position in the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

That was his concept of eternal life. Radically different from ours. Both good but different. And that's what the rich young ruler was thinking about when he asked what must I do to have eternal life.

And Jesus said, well, you know the commandments, keep the commandments. I've done that, I've kept all of those from my youth up. Jesus said, one thing you lack, you sell whatever you have and give it to the poor and come and follow me and you'll have treasures laid up in heaven.

[15 : 52] And we are told that he turned away sorrowful because he had much possessions.

Couldn't bring himself to do it. Why was Jesus telling him that? Why was Jesus using that kind of an answer so different from what we would give today?

It was the right answer for the right time and the right situation. He was presenting himself as the king. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That means it is close by, dependent only on his crucifixion and Israel's acceptance. And this young man would not meet the qualifications.

In Matthew let's see Matthew 5 maybe it's Luke yeah Luke 3 when John the Baptist is preaching and he is telling them to bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance and as John was preaching and identifying Jesus as the king and that the kingdom of heaven was at hand and we read in verse 12 of Luke chapter 3 and some tax gatherers also came to be baptized and they said to him teacher what shall we do?

[17 : 32] Now I want you to note when they asked John the Baptist what are we supposed to do? What does God want us to do? John does not say believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved because Christ the son of God has come and he is going to die on the cross for the sins of the world and you are to anticipate that and look forward to that and believe on it.

No! No! No! No! No! No! Never entered a mind. When they ask what are we supposed to do they mean what is our behavior supposed to be like?

How are we supposed to conduct ourselves in anticipation of this kingdom coming? And he said to the tax collectors alright collect no more than what you have been ordered to.

Well what were they doing? They were ripping off the public because they had a quota imposed upon them by the Roman authorities and by the way these tax collectors were Jews but they were collecting taxes for the Romans and that made them hated despised by their own countrymen who saw them as turncoats traitors these tax collectors were looked upon as people who would do anything for a buck even stab their own people in the back and they are on the Roman payroll exacting taxes from their own people and not only that but the Romans gave them a quota every month that they had to meet from their constituency but everything over that they got to keep so they were just ripping the people off right and left remember

Zacchaeus little man wee little man was he Zacchaeus was a tax collector and he came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah and his repentance his repentance of his sin was so genuine he said Lord if I've defrauded anybody I want to restore it sevenfold those that I've cheated I want to make it up to them that's an indication of real repentance collect no more than what you have been ordered to and some soldiers were questioning him saying and what about us what shall we do now these soldiers generally assumed were probably Roman soldiers I don't know about that they may have been temple police they may have been Jewish police soldiers that's just not clear I suspect that they were however because they wouldn't be asking a

[20 : 22] Jewish forerunner of the Messiah about their responsibilities they take orders from their superiors not from some prophet out preaching in the wilderness so I suspect they were fellow Jews as well what about us what shall we do and John the Baptist said to them do not take money from anyone by force in other words don't shake anybody down don't strong arm anybody or accuse anyone falsely and be content with your wages now while the people were in a state of expectation expectation about what expectation about what John was preaching get ready everybody the promise that God gave 4,000 years ago is about to be fulfilled right before your very eyes that's the expectation this thing was electric these people were beside themselves really pumped

God is finally going to make good on his promise and Jesus was the basis of it all wondering now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John as to whether he John might be the Christ this guy is saying things and talking about things that the Messiah is going to talk could he be the Messiah could John be the Messiah well he certainly looked like it and he sounded like it but John answered and said to them all as for me I baptize you with water but one is coming who is mightier than I and I am not fit to untie the thong of his sandals he will baptize you with the

Holy Spirit and fire and his winnowing fork is in his hand to thoroughly clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire the wheat are the believers the chaff are the unbelievers there's going to be a reward and there's going to be a punishment and John is saying when this one comes this is what he's going to do now this is what they were in anticipation of this is why they had lands and goods and they sold it and they divided to everyone I don't want to jump ahead too far here but I want to show you how connected this is how tied together this is remember remember in Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 remember when those who had lands sold them and brought the money from the land and laid it at the apostles feet and said here you guys know who the needy are distribute this among them remember that why were they doing that why were they selling their land same reason this is all connected this is connected to the rich young ruler when

Jesus said sell what you have give it to the poor and come and follow me that's kingdom conditions and here in Acts chapter 2 same thing and in Acts chapter 5 Ananias and Sapphira and those having properties and land sold them brought the money same thing they're all in anticipation of this kingdom of heaven come to earth the first leg for that requirement has already been met and that is the death burial and resurrection of the Messiah the second leg is this it's the embracing of Jesus as the Messiah by the nation of Israel that they will not do and they still have not done so Romans 9 10 and 11 tells us that the nation of Israel is set apart in judicial unbelief and that blindness blindness this is spiritual blindness not physical blindness blindness in part not total not total but spiritual blindness in part has happened unto

Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in what does that mean what is the fullness of the Gentiles it means that when the Gentiles and Gentiles are non Jews everyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile and that's about 99% of the world's population and when the time of the Gentiles is filled up finished this means the heyday for the Gentiles is over they're done they are down the tubes when will that be great tribulation Armageddon that's the end the Gentiles are finished the times of the Gentiles refers to the supremacy of the Gentiles the dominance of the Gentiles over who over

[26 : 12] Israel it began with Egypt Israel was under the heel of Egypt and the Pharaoh and when they came into the promised land they had to deal with the Philistines and they were under their thumb for a long time and all of the others and then they had to contend with the Greeks dominated them the Babylonians dominated them led them into captivity the Romans dominated them come into the Middle Ages Spain dominated them persecuted and the Jew was persecuted throughout Europe during the Middle Ages and they have always been dominated by somebody the nation of Israel has been a stomping ground virtually every army in the world has marched through Israel and decimated the place they've been under the gun surrounded by Islamic nations that want nothing but their destruction the time is coming when the heyday the power the influence the supremacy of the

Gentiles will come will come to an end and when that does then Israel will rise in ascendancy to the position of power and domination throughout the whole world and the world headquarters will be Jerusalem and Jesus the Messiah will be ruling and reigning and the time of the Gentiles will have come to an end and Israel will be fulfilling all of the promises that God gave to them which have never been fulfilled and this will be in connection with Israel embracing Jesus as their Messiah and that will happen fellas when the nation of Israel is right on the very brink of annihilation by the forces of the Antichrist at the end of the great tribulation this is Armageddon and we are told in

Revelation 19 and in Matthew 24 that Christ the Messiah will return then and every eye will see him and Zechariah says and they meaning the people of Israel they will look upon him whom they pierced and they shall mourn as one mourns for their only son that will be national repentance on the part of Israel and fellows that's what Peter is calling the nation of Israel to in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost this has nothing to do with the church or the beginning of it this is all Jewish and Peter is saying to the people of Israel repent repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus the Messiah and you will receive the gift of the

Holy Spirit and some did 3,000 did most did not the message is going to be repeated in a dramatic fashion by the same guy Peter the chief spokesperson in Acts chapter 3 that will be upcoming next and when we look at that we will see that Israel as a nation in its leadership is again confronted with the opportunity to embrace this one whom they crucified and to get ahead of myself a little bit what will Israel's answer be they will lay hands on them and put them in prison put them in jail and threaten them they will beat them and Israel's rejection seems to be culminated with the stoning of Stephen in Acts chapter 7 and in my opinion which should send up a red flag to you but in my opinion I think the stoning of

Stephen by the very top leadership of Israel being the ones to physically throw the stones that appears to be Israel's final answer and God says all right that's it and he picks Israel up as a nation and brings them over and sets them down there and he says I'll deal again with you later four and now

[31 : 30] Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul the apostle least likely individual in the whole world and he comes to faith in Christ and this man burns out his life proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God fascinating fascinating and all of this is developing right here before our eyes in the book of Acts questions or comments the food will be here shortly they have great difficulty with the apostle Paul if you talk to almost any Jew today and I've talked with some Jewish rabbis and it is amazing I'll tell you you talk about spiritual blindness happening to Israel they are a classic case of spiritual blindness and some of the rabbis that I have actually talked to about the person of Jesus say things like this don't get us wrong some people think that we Jews are opposed to

Jesus not at all we consider Jesus a great rabbi a great teacher a wonderful moral example we don't have a problem with Jesus but fellas let me explain to you what I mean by spiritual blindness throughout the four gospels Jesus Christ makes it very clear who he is and who sent him and why he came he makes it very clear but if what he said about himself is not true it just isn't true how can you call him a great teacher or a great man or a great example he's a liar he's an imposter he's phony if he isn't who he said he was he's not worthy of being believed about anything and to say that oh he's a great example we have no doubt he was a great rabbi that's nonsense that's double speak that is spiritual blindness and they will go on to say we don't have a problem with

Jesus well they should have if they understand what he said about himself but then they say the one we really have a problem with is Paul the apostle because we believe that Paul the apostle made claims that are simply not true well in keeping with their thinking so did Jesus he made a lot of claims that Jews don't believe to be true he said things like before Abraham was I am what I am do you know what bell that rang in the mind of every Jew Exodus 3 14 Moses said who will I tell Pharaoh sent me you tell Pharaoh that the I am that I am sent you what does that mean he is the ever unceasing existing one who exists because of himself tell him that one sent you that's who

Jesus said he is in John 8 58 I am and you know something the Jews understood perfectly well what he meant that's why they took up stones to stone Christ right on the spot because he said he was the son of God thus making himself equal to God that is blasphemy and blasphemy demands the penalty of death find some stones men we'll take care of him right here and the only reason they didn't was because his time had not yet come Jesus was not to die by stoning psalm 22 and isaiah 53 made it very clear he's going to die by crucifixion which was a method of execution that didn't even exist at the time it was prophesied by isaiah and the psalmist other questions or comments anybody dan there has been a lot of groups in our country that wanted to get the utopia yeah is there any relationship between lay down your treasures and follow me for the common good and

I think in those Jesus said lay down your treasures and follow me is there is that the difference lies these people that try to establish utopia never work well you're right it doesn't work now the Bible makes it very clear that generosity is a virtue and no one has a greater reason or greater motivation for being generous and caring and sharing and helping and aiding no one should have a greater motivation for doing that than those who know the Lord Jesus Christ because if you have an appreciation for who and what you are in Christ that's going to affect your mentality that's going to affect your attitude about your possessions about helping others etc it's going to impact it and the Bible makes it very clear I am not saying that because we are not trying to meet kingdom conditions that we shouldn't therefore be generous or we shouldn't care about the poor or anything like that

[37 : 21] I'm not saying that at all I'm just saying that this kingdom motif that was put in place there that actually required them to bring their possessions and sell them and give to the poor that was in keeping with that anticipated program that they thought was going to begin and they were just getting in on the ground floor of it now when you read a little later in the book of Acts the apostle in the various stops that he is making on his missionary journeys you know one of the things he's doing one of the things one of his chief responsibilities that's often lost sight of is virtually every congregation that he went to Thessalonica Philippi Corinth etc he took up a collection what was the collection for it was for the poor saints in

Jerusalem what the poor saints in Jerusalem yeah these were people that were living in poverty in Jerusalem and I cannot help but believe some of them were the same people that sold their possessions and gave to the poor and now they are poor they are poor what's that all about that all ties in with this picture it is a remarkable thing and it's all right here in the book of Acts it's just that so often we just read and skip through it and we just don't make the connections and see and then we get caught up in their generosity and we say that's what we ought to be doing well should we is that what we ought to be doing should we be bringing all of our assets in and let the elders or the deacons distribute it to everyone as they have need should we be handling snakes should we be drinking poison all this is saying that during this time there is going to be supernatural protection for those so that if they are bitten by a deadly serpent they will not be killed and by the way these folks and

I'm convinced that their heart is in this they really believe they're right down in Tennessee you were reading that thing about the snake handling I really be curious to know if any of them are drinking any poison because that's there in that passage too in Mark 16 that if they take up serpents and are bitten by them they'll not be harmed or if they drink any deadly poison they will not be harmed why is that that's because they are going to be supernaturally protected during that time but this isn't it I've often wondered if you took a cup of strychnine or arsenic and handed it to one of those handling snakes if they'd be willing to drink it that would be a curious exhibition would it not well anything else before we close the food is here yes Roger yeah yeah very very good point when when the lord told abraham through you and your seed all nations of the earth will be blessed i think that has principal reference to the messiah who is to come and all the earth has been blessed through the appearance death burial and resurrection of jesus christ but i'll tell you it is undeniable the descendants of abraham isaac and jacob have made incredible disproportionate contributions to humanity that has benefited the human race in ways that are just almost unimaginable and i'll share some of those with you in our future sessions because the jewish people i'll tell you no people on the face of the earth has undergone such intense persecution and deprivation as the jew and no nation on the face of the earth has made such enormous contributions for the betterment of all mankind than the jew it is an amazing thing and it is undeniable the statistics are there and i'll share them with you upcoming yes dana just along those same lines any profession that you choose any grouping do several jews at the top of it yeah leading it doesn't matter what it is you're right they're intelligent and they rise to the top of whatever you're absolutely right and probably in medicine in science in the sciences in general and in the arts they have had a disproportionate contribution for people that makes up such a tiny tiny percentage of the world population they have been enormous in the contributions that they have made and a great many of them were made while they were a downtrodden persecuted people which makes it even more remarkable because they weren't given carte blanche to do these things they often made their discoveries under intense negative conditions enjoy your breakfast and we'll continue this next week