

Kingdom / Miracles in Revelation and Acts

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Date: 23 December 2021

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[0 : 0 0] Well, this is going to be our final study, the subject of the miracles, and I want you to consider, if you will, the fact that as we have engaged this content, we have made a connection between the miracles that Jesus performed and the purpose for which he performed them, and that has to do, and I'll recap this as quickly and as briefly as I can, but I want to provide the overall background, and that is, as God originally created this earth, the Bible tells us as chapter one ends, and God looked upon all that he created and made, and behold, it was very good. God was pleased with it, but something happened, and as a result of the individuals that he created, Adam and Eve, and placed them in the garden, he gave to them a thing that we call a will or a volition, which gave them the ability to make choices, and the choice that they could make would be to obey the creator, who told them, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is in the midst of the garden, you shall not eat of it, because in the day that you eat thereof, you will surely die. Well, they didn't even know what dying meant, because nobody had died up to that time. These are our first parents, and we are told that they continued to live that way, and they enjoyed the fruit of the garden, and everything was provided for them. God visited with them in the person of a pre-incarnate Christ, and the time came when another individual was injected, and we're not going to spend much time about this, but that will play out in the study that will be starting probably Thursday morning, tomorrow morning, and that was none other than Satan, who originally was created innocent as well, and he too was given a will, and he exercised that will, and by the way, in case you're wondering, what is all this problem about a will, and human will, and why did God create us with the capacity to disobey him? Well, the only option he had would be to create us with the capacity not to be able to disobey. In other words, not give us a will or volition so that we have no choice, so that we just automatically always respond in the right way and do the right thing, which would be a very boring way to live. You would be like a puppet.

You would be a robot who had no ability to exercise your will at all. God didn't want that, so he chose the other option, and as far as I can understand, there are only two options, to give us a will or to not give us a will, but if you give creatures that are dependent upon you a will, you run the risk of them using it. God knew exactly what was going to happen. We use the term risk because of our humanity, and we don't know how things are going to play out. God knew full well when he gave angels the ability to obey or disobey and give humans the ability to obey or disobey, there was going to be the opportunity for them to use it. Lucifer used his, and he became known as Satan, which means the adversary or the opponent, and he set himself up as one who wanted to depose God and take his place.

This is spelled out in Isaiah chapter 14. We haven't got time to go to it, but at any rate, there you will find his origin. And then when God created the first parents, Adam and Eve, it was this satanic being, this adversary, who came into the scene, and he was present in earth. He took the form of a serpent, and we don't know exactly what all this means because this is prior to, this was prior to this world, and it was a world that was completely different from this world, and that everything was as it ought to be. No animals were vicious or ferocious. Nothing was vegetarian. I mean, nothing was carnivorous. Everything was vegetarian. Adam and Eve were vegetarian and so on, and that's all going to change later. But as a result of the temptation from the adversary who tempted our first parents in order to gain allies for his cause, they ate of the forbidden fruit, and as a result, something took place in the lives, in the bodies of Adam and Eve that God did not put there. And it was a sin nature, and they came under this curse called death. And as a result, Adam is going to be 930 years old before he dies, and we look at that, and we say, well, those aren't, those aren't our, yeah, they are our ears.

Because back then, the world was totally different, and the things that devastate us today did not even exist then. We have a vapor barrier over the earth then that shielded humanity and animals from ultraviolet rays that can damage, and that barrier was removed as a result of the fall, and now we are exposed to the full limits of the sun and all that involves that, and people can come down with skin cancer and all kinds of problems. And that too is part of the change that has taken place as a result of the... Consequently, the whole world is screwed up. Everything is messed up. People are messed up.

We're all under the sentence of death, and because of that, Adam and Eve passed on to us what they themselves were, and that included the fallen nature and the capacity to end our lives. So we die physically, and we die spiritually, which is a different issue, but both of these things are involved. And the reason that Christ came into this world was to bring the kingdom of heaven, that is, things as they originally existed, back into play again, to restore the earth to its original founding without all of the disease and the problems and everything that goes with it. And the manner in which that was to be done is that the kingdom of heaven is to be brought to the earth, and Christ is the one who was to bring it. He came for the purpose of being able to restore everything that was broken and fix everything that was broken. And he gave humanity, while he was here for those three years, he gave them a sample, a taste of the purpose of the kingdom of heaven, and the way things would be if Israel, which was the responsible key nation, if they would embrace him and receive him as their savior, then he would establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, and things would be restored. And in order to prove to Israel who he was, he performed miracles, he performed miracles, which were nothing more than restoring elements of the fallen earth to what they ought to be. And people were able to witness those miracles and see for themselves the power that was residing in this individual. And Jesus Christ was nothing more than God incarnated in human flesh, dwelling among men, and revealing himself through these miracles.

[8 : 36] As you read the four gospels, and with the time we spent in them, I don't know how many months we spent, but we probably did, probably did 20 or 30 sessions at least on the miracles. All of those miracles that Christ performed simply proved to the constituency, to the recipients, who he was. And he exercised power by raising the dead, by giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and all the rest, and he cured all kinds of, he demonstrated power over the elements, and then he caused the seed to cease, and the wind to stop blowing. He caused the fish that had that coin in its mouth that Peter found to pay the temple tax, and all the rest of these things. He demonstrated in every way that he was, the Messiah, the one that was promised way back in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15. And he was the seed of the woman. He was a direct descendant. If you want to know the origin of Christ, you read the genealogy in Matthew chapter 3, and read it in, I'm sorry, Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3, and it explains the line of Christ and the Jewish line through which he was to come. All of this is very involved, but it's stuff that we've undertaken in the past. And by the way, all of those miracle studies were recorded, and they are available for free distribution for anybody that wants them.

Just let me know if you would like them, and we can get them to you. So where we are now is having gone through and discussed the 33 miracles that Christ performed while in the Gospels, and to extend those into the book of Acts is an indication that the kingdom that Jesus came to offer, that would be the restored kingdom, the repaired kingdom, the opportunity for that was still available, and it was being presented to Israel. Now the question comes up, well, why Israel? What do they have to do with it?

Israel is the key nation. It is the spearhead nation. It is also the nation from which Christ would come through the line of Judah. And these were all Jews. And God had established, going way back to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, the fact that this select group of people, known as the Jew, would be the spearhead nation, would be the key nation that would give light to all of the other nations, and bring all of the other nations under the authority of God. But they themselves had to be their first. And this they wanted no part of. This is why they rejected Christ as their Messiah. They didn't believe Him to be the Messiah, because the only deliverance they were looking for, the only thing they wanted cured was the bondage that they had to the Romans. The Romans were occupying the land. Roman soldiers were stationed there, and there were thousands of them. And they were collecting taxes from the Jewish people and so on. And that's the deliverance that they wanted.

So when Jesus came performing His miracles, that was all well and good. But what are you going to do about the Romans? We want a military Messiah. And when the message came for the nation of Israel to repent, that was Jesus putting the burden and indicating that the problem was with Israel.

[12 : 16] You folks have to get your act together. Then you will be in a position to bring the rest of the world in line. But it has to begin with your submitting to me as the Messiah. And their answer was, nothing doing. We will not have this man to reign over us. Crucify him. So as a result, they crucified the Messiah. God raised him from the dead three days later and presented him to as many as, how many were, how many were they? Hundreds of people at one time. He presented himself, last of all, to Paul the apostle on the road to Damascus. So all of these things come together.

And what we've got now is Christ has ascended and gone back to heaven. So what's of the kingdom? What's happened to the kingdom? As the book of Acts opens in the very first chapter, just before Jesus ascends before them and goes back to heaven, Peter asked the question, Lord, is it at this time that you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Because it has to start with Israel. That's the plan. And Jesus said, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons which the father of placed in his own power, but you shall receive power after the spirit of God has come upon you and so on. So Jesus went back to heaven, but the kingdom that he came to offer Israel, that Israel rejected, is still available even after he left the earth. That's a very important key.

And what I base that on is when Jesus was on the cross, one of the statements he made, he made seven statements from the cross. And one of them was, father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

I am of the opinion that the father answered that prayer and he forgave them. And what that means is Israel got a reprieve. They got a second chance. And as you read on in the book of Acts, chapter 2, the miracles continue. What's that a sign of? That's a sign that the miracle of the kingdom of heaven is still in play. That was evidenced by the ongoing miracles. And we saw the miracle of Pentecost and where the hall of people, the 3,000 who responded, they were actually able to hear, although they were from all over the earth, gathered there for the feast of Pentecost.

They were Jews from all over the world and they spoke different languages. They had a common religion. That's why they were there in the Jewish temple for the feast of Pentecost. But they all spoke these different languages. And the only people they could communicate with, with the people that came with them from the same country. And the miracle of languages was given is called the speaking in tongues, whereby God reversed the tower of Babel and the confusion of languages. And everyone was able to hear in their own language. And they were amazed. What is this? How, how can this be?

[15 : 49] There's a language barrier here. We can't speak the language of those people, but everybody was hearing in their own tongue. And that too was a miracle. And that was God revealing to Israel, you still have a chance at this thing. You can still obey. And Jesus inspired Peter to tell them in Acts chapter three, that if Israel will repent, see two things, two things are necessary for the kingdom of kingdom of heaven to come to earth. Call it utopia, call it paradise regain, call it the world as it ought to be. Two things are necessary. First of all, there has to be a price paid for the ruined world. That's what Jesus accomplished when he died for our sins. That's why Paul said in writing to the Corinthians, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. That is bringing the world back to its original position. And he died for the sins of every human being. And he made everyone savable. He didn't make everyone saved. But he made everyone savable so that everyone could be saved if they, and here comes that volition again, if they exercise the will to do so. God will not make anyone be saved. But he provides the opportunity. He gives the invitation. And he says, come, come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. He's talking about spiritual rest. So you may come, or you may not come. But God does not force his opinion or his will upon you. And as a result, the world has been placed in a holding position where we are undergoing the depravity, the death, the disease, and everything still awaiting that kingdom of heaven. And Jesus paid the penalty. He paid for the price. He paid the price for a world that had gone wrong. And because of who he was, he was able to do that.

That is the first thing that has to be accomplished. What is the second? That Israel, the target people, must get on board as a nation, must get on board as a nation, and then the rest of the world could come along. And when Peter addresses these people in the day after Pentecost in Acts chapter 3, he tells them that Jesus has fulfilled the first leg of this journey. He paid the penalty for a

fallen world.

Now, what remains is for you to receive him as your Savior and believe on him as the Messiah. And if you do, God will send him back.

Well, he'd only been gone. He'd only been gone 10 days. He told them, not many days hence, you will be endued with power. He was taken up from them.

But 10 days later was Pentecost. And Israel is given this opportunity and 3,000 responded. But the vast majority of the nation was still in unbelief and they were still in a rejection mode.

[19 : 24] So what God is going to do is extend the offer and the opportunity to Israel. And what's he going to use to do it? Same thing he did in the Gospels. Book of Acts, the miracles. We've already looked at several of them.

We saw the miracle of Pentecost that began. The people were absolutely amazed. They said, what's the meaning of all this? Peter explained it. You go on through the book of Acts, you get more miracles.

We've already considered several of them. And we come down now to the closure of the book of Acts and the end of the subject of the miracles. And I want you to turn to Acts chapter 7, if you will. And frankly, I don't know why I'm starting here. Okay, well, we're not going to have time to do that. So let's go back to the back of the book.

Acts chapter 27. I'll make this as brief as I can, but there's so much to consider. What we're going to do, guys, is from the time that Jesus was ascended in Acts chapter 1, which is just shortly after his crucifixion, just 40 days after his crucifixion, what we're going to do now in Acts chapter 27 is fast forward 40 years.

[20 : 52] From Acts 1 to Acts 27, we are fast forwarding about 38 to 40 years.

And a number of things have transpired in the Acts that we've already considered. Many miracles continued. There was a miracle of Peter's release from prison. The angel came and released him. And there was the stoning of Stephen.

You'll recall that. And many miracles continued. We saw early on in Acts 3 and in Acts 4, the institution of what would be called an early kind of communism, where people had all things common. All of this was an effort to fulfill the kingdom program.

And as a result, the ongoing disobedience of Israel was maintained. And they didn't crucify, but they stoned Stephen to death.

And some scholars are of the opinion that that was the final straw and that God withdrew his offer then. And others believe that it wasn't withdrawn until you get later into the book of Acts.

[22 : 02] So now what we've got is a closure of the book of Acts. And what is certainly the closure of the offer of the kingdom, if it was extended to this point in time, and I cannot say one way or another, I just don't know.

But I do know this. The miracles continue and we are going to see them decline. And if my theory about this is correct, that the miracles accompany the offer of the kingdom.

So what is it saying when the offer of the kingdom is no longer available? The miracles stop. These go hand in hand.

And this, by the way, guys, this is why we are not seeing a manifestation of the miracles. People say, where are the miracles today? You find them in the Bible. And that causes some to say, well, they weren't real.

They were just make-believe. They were just, no, they were real. They were real. There's no question about that. And the people who saw them and witnessed them never questioned them. So they were real.

[23 : 07] But the reason they ceased is because while miracles were the order of the day with the offering of the kingdom, the kingdom is not being offered today and miracles are not the order of the day.

God can do miracles any time he wants, any way he wants. But his modus operandi is not in a world today that is accompanied by miracles.

And when a miracle happens today, it's a real abnormality. It's a real thing. There are a lot of things people call miracles, but they're not miracles at all.

A miracle is that which is totally contrary to the way the laws of nature operate. That's a miracle. We deal all day long with the laws of nature.

Law of gravity. Law of gravity is a natural law. And if you jump off of a building, the law of gravity is going to take over.

[24 : 13] And you're going to fall to your death. But if you are Jesus and you're ready to go back to heaven, you can defy the law of gravity and bodily ascend right before the eyes of witnesses and go right into heaven.

Well, where's the gravity with that? There isn't a gravity there. He has overcome the law of gravity because he's the one who instituted it. He's the Lord of gravity.

He can do that with anything. He can still the wind. He can calm the sea because he made them. That is superseding the existing laws.

And the only one who can supersede them is the one who instituted them. And that is our Lord Jesus. So the miracles were not a problem with him.

But now he's gone and so are the miracles. And when some people do not give an account or do not realize that the book of Acts is a book that is unfolding, developing in transition over a period of time where you are in moving from one dispensation or administration to another.

[25 : 25] Let me ask you this. Is there anything that is harder to hit than a moving target? It'd be a lot easier to hit it if it would just hold still.

You can get a beat on it. But when it's moving, it's hard to pin down. That, guys, is the problem with the book of Acts, if I can call it a problem. It is doctrine that is developing.

It is changing. It is growing. It is moving. And what it is moving from is the law of Moses and the administration that was given at Mount Sinai that the Jews were obedient to, partly at least.

And it is moving from the law of Moses to the administration of grace. And the law of Moses was given to Israel, for Israel exclusively.

It was a national thing. But the administration of grace is not national. It's individual.

[26 : 30] And it is provided for everyone. For whosoever will, will, whosoever will, may come to the Lord.

And it is a personal, individual thing that is extended not just to Jews, but to Jews and Gentiles, Jews and non-Jews.

And those who embrace that gospel of the grace of God are given eternal life as a gift. Unearned, undeserved gift from God because Christ paid the penalty for your sin.

And when you exercise your faith by committing yourself to Jesus Christ as your Savior, God responds by giving you undeserved eternal life as a gift of his grace.

This, guys, is why it's called good news. That's the gospel. That's what the word gospel means. So what we find now in the book of Acts, chapter 28, if you will look at it, we've got Paul who is engaged in a tremendous storm.

[27 : 51] They're on the Mediterranean Sea. And a storm comes up. And we are told that this was a dandy. It was called a nor'easter. And its thing is going to go on for two solid weeks.

And it's going to be dark. Tremendous rainfall. Tremendous wind. The ship is going to be tossed and turned. Eventually, it will land on the rocks on the coast of Malta where they will be shipwrecked.

And what's taking place, they're trying to survive this tremendous ordeal. And I want you to look, if you would, please, at Acts, chapter 28, and verse 1.

I'm sorry. We've got to take 27 first. I just want you to look. Here is a miracle here for sure. And if you look at verse 9, they're in the middle of this tremendous storm called Eurocliden.

And they are on a huge vessel, largest vessel of its kind at the time. It was a grain ship. And it was carrying a cargo of grain from Egypt to Rome.

[29 : 06] And it is in the midst of this tremendous storm. And we read in verse 27 and verse 9, When considerable time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul, he's a prisoner.

He's chained to a Roman soldier who is taking him, escorting him to Rome, so that he will be able to present his case to Caesar because he's a Roman citizen.

And this guard is escorting him because he is a Roman citizen. He is given the courtesy of appealing to Rome. And this guard is taking him on board this ship along with a whole bunch of other people.

And they are going to Rome, but they encounter this tremendous storm. And we read in verse 10 or verse 9, The voyage was now dangerous. The fast was over.

Paul began to admonish them. And he said to them, Men, he's talking to the whole people on board the ship. And you imagine, he's screaming. He's screaming for his voice to be heard above all of the noise and the wind and the weather.

[30 : 10] And he says, Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be attended with damage and great loss, and not only of the cargo and of the ship, but also of our lives.

But the centurion, and he is the guy who is guarding Paul. He's handcuffed to Paul. He's responsible to present Paul before Caesar. And we are told that the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.

Well, put yourself in his position. You probably would have been too. Because after all, it was the captain who was the sea voyaging expert.

What did Paul know about traveling on the sea? This guy had been on the sea for all of his life. And the centurion thought, I'm going to go with this guy's advice because he's the expert. He's the seaman.

And we are told because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out the sea from there. And when they do, they hit this storm called Eurocliden in verse 14.

[31 : 19] And it is a tremendous time. They are doing everything that they can to try and salvage the situation. Verse 20, verse 19 says, On the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

They've jettisoned the cargo. They're trying to make the ship lighter so it can survive. And in verse 20 it says, Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm.

That's another way of saying it was a dandy. No small storm, means it was a big storm, was assailing us. From then on, all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

These seasoned old salts had been in storms before, and they knew this was not one like they'd ever experienced before. We're not going to make it through this one.

And they were pretty much convinced. And then Paul tells them in verse 21, he can't resist the I told you so. Verse 21, When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, Men, you ought to have followed my advice, and not to have set sail from Crete, and incurred this damage and loss.

[32 : 36] And yet, now, I urge you to keep up your courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only the ship.

Well, how does he know that? What makes him so sure of that? Read the next verse. For this very night, An angel of the God to whom I belong, and whom I serve, stood before me, saying, Do not be afraid, Paul.

You must stand before Caesar. That means you're not going to drown here. You must stand before Caesar, and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.

Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe, God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. But, now Paul's still speaking, and he says, But we must run aground on a certain island.

And when the 14th night had come, they are dealing with this for two solid weeks. As we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight, the sailors, these are the seasoned crew hands, the sailors began to surmise that they were approaching some land.

[34 : 12] And they took soundings, they put down the depth, sounding, and found it to be the depth, 20 furlongs. And a little further on, they took another sounding, found it to be 15 fathoms, which means they're getting closer and closer to land.

And fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak. And as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the ship's boat into the sea on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the boat, what these guys were doing, these seasoned hands, they were jumping ship.

They were going to save themselves, leave the rest behind. They were going to abandon ship right then and there, but they didn't want the people to know it. They were intending to lay, they acted like they were just going to lay out anchors from the bow.

And Paul knew what they were doing. And Paul said to the Roman centurion and to the soldiers, listen, these guys are trying to go over the side. If you let them, all will be lost.

And Paul said, unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved. Now they're listening to Paul because they listened to the captain before and they got bad advice.

[35 : 35] Now they're listening to Paul. And then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship and let it fall away. That means the soldiers took over and they got past the seamen who were trying to lower the boats.

They said, nothing doing. You guys are staying on board with us. And they gave the order, cut away the boats. And they cut away the boats and the boats left the main ship empty.

And everybody, including the sailors that we're going to abandon ship, are staying on. And then we are told that until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, today is the 14th day.

You've been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing. Therefore, I encourage you to take some food. This is for your preservation. And then Paul makes this statement. Not a hair from the head of any of you shall perish.

He gave thanks for the bread. They encouraged it. They were encouraged. And all in the ship were saved, 276 persons. And the end result was they made it to the island nation of Malta.

[36 : 43] And there they are going to spend a couple of days. The ship will be completely destroyed, broken up on the rocks, but all 276 will be saved.

And this is a result of one of the latest. In fact, this is the latest miracle in the book of Acts. And there's no question God supernaturally intervened for them.

So, we'll try to clean up some loose ends and any questions that you may have next time. And then, I want you to think in terms of the study that we're going to engage further.

And I've already explained that to you about the cards. So, enjoy your breakfast in the day ahead.