

Kingdom Content Continues

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[0 : 00] Well, we are continuing our consideration of the miracles, and we have concluded those that are recorded in the four Gospels.

And we are continuing our study because there is an abundance of miracles to be dealt with in the book of Acts, and our Lord Jesus Christ is involved with every one of them.

And I want to make a few things clear before we get underway so you can have some thoughts in the back of your mind and maybe generate some questions or ideas you'll have later on.

And that is in connection with what we've just been talking about. The miracles constitute a normality.

In that the need for miracles to even be performed is because of an abnormality.

[0 : 59] And the abnormality that has set in for most of us, in fact for the world as a whole, has come to be the new norm.

And that is the new norm is a body of weakness that is capable of disease and death and all of these other things. That is the new norm.

But Jesus doesn't like the new norm, and that's why he ruined it everywhere he went. And in doing what he did, he merely restored those abnormal bodies to what was normal in the beginning.

And that, by the way, fellas, is the way it's going to be in this miraculous thing called the kingdom of heaven once it is established. It will be radically different from this world that we now experience.

And it was just this last Sunday that I reiterated a whole list of items. I think there were in excess of 20 of them that were compiled by Dr. Dwight Pentecost as to the characteristics that are going to accompany the kingdom.

[2 : 06] And it will be literally heaven's reign and rule on the earth in opposed to what it is now. Now it is a fallen world, and death and disease permeates it everywhere.

And when Jesus was here, he addressed that world's new normal, and he restored it to his normal. And his normal is found in the book of Genesis when after creation he was able to look at all that he created and pronounced it very good.

You can't say that about it now because it isn't very good. It is fraught with all kinds of evil and corruption and everything that goes with it. But when that kingdom of heaven is established on earth, it will be a reversal of the abnormal, what has become abnormal, and it will be back to the normal.

So that's what we're dealing with. And it is only fitting that I remind you the issues we will be dealing with in the book of Acts today and for probably the next few weeks constitutes the principal passage of Scripture that divides Christendom more than anything else.

It is the interpretation and the approach that people take to the content in the book of Acts. That more than anything else separates Protestants from Catholics, from Jews.

[3 : 44] That more than anything else separates Presbyterians from Baptists, from Methodists, from Church of God. All of these things find their respective positions based upon their interpretation and understanding of the book of Acts.

That's why it is so critical to understand this book. And to preface the remarks that will follow with something that is really very, very important, and I just hope you get this in your bones and never release it, and that is the whole of the Bible is a book of development and unfolding and changing. It is doctrine on the move. It begins in Genesis, ends in Revelation, and what is transpiring in between is moving, developing, and increasing, and on and on it goes.

But when you get to the book of Acts, it is that accelerated because all of the change and all of the development and all of the progression occurs within a period of three decades, just 30 years.

And that's what makes this book so very important. And as we open, we saw the ascension of our Lord in chapter 1. He's gone back to heaven.

[5 : 13] And we posed what is a common belief among many, and that is when Jesus died on the cross, that was Israel's final answer to Jesus being presented as the King of Israel and as the Messiah.

And Israel's answer was, no thanks. And they crucified their Messiah. And the common opinion among many is, that was it.

God wrote them off, and He is starting with a whole new thing. And this whole new thing is called the Church, the Body of Christ, and it begins in Acts chapter 2.

That by far and away is the majority opinion, and it is one that we believe simply cannot be sustained by Scripture. And what I'm basing this on is what we will see in just a moment.

That, and I cannot emphasize this too much, because it is critical to the whole argument that we're talking about. And that is, the crucifixion of Christ was not Israel's final answer, and the string is still out, and there is yet an opportunity for Israel to turn around and embrace the one whom they earlier rejected.

[6 : 38] I could not agree more that it looked like the death of Christ was the end of the opportunity for Israel. But you've got to remember this, guys. The principal reason that Jesus came was to die.

Adam and Eve were born to live, created to live. Jesus was born to die. But for this cause came I into the world, He said.

And that cause was to die. Father, what shall I say? Save me from this hour? He's talking about the hour of His impending death. And then He said, But for this hour came I into the world.

So, the death of Christ actually was the payment that was made to give Him the right to rule and to reign over this world.

In other words, in His death for the sins of humanity, He bought and paid for a fallen world. And when He returns, He will claim what He paid for the first time.

[7 : 46] But He hasn't claimed that since. And the reason He hasn't is because this whole process of development is unfolding and ongoing. And the time is coming when there's going to be even more radical changes.

And that will be, of course, with the rapture of the church, the body of Christ removed. So, what I'm saying is this. We're going to see here in the book of Acts, and to me, this was crystal clear, but I must admit, for the first, for the first 15 years of my Christian life, I did not see this.

And the reason I didn't was because I just automatically bought in to the party line that was developed in that culture in which I was saved.

and I was so, you know, emotionally indebted to those who were instrumental in bringing me to Christ and leading me to Christ and giving me appreciation for the scriptures and everything.

I just kind of bought wholesale whatever they said was true and I just didn't question it. Including the water baptism and the whole nine yards. And it wasn't until I really got serious about the scriptures, and I must say this, which most Christians are not.

[9 : 02] I'm sorry to say that, but I know it's true. Serious about the scriptures, which most Christians are not. They believe it, they understand it to a point, but it really doesn't turn them on like it should.

And that's just because of our human nature. And when I came to these truths and began embracing them, and let me inject this also.

Once you see that something is true and you refuse to believe it or act on it, further truth is shut down.

you get truth only on the basis of embracing, acting upon, and living out the truth you already have. And when and if the time comes that you don't, then that new truth gets shut down and it's not available to you until you act on what you do know.

[10 : 09] So that's why a lot of people, a lot of Christians are stunted in their spiritual growth. And I just cannot tell you how grateful I am for the exposure that was made to me some 15 years after I became a believer that allowed me to enjoy and appreciate some of the things that just went over my head before.

Things that I didn't know about and didn't even care about. Didn't even know enough about them to care about them. But it is amazing how you get a new appreciation for how everything in the scriptures comes together and fits.

And I've often said everything in the Bible is connected to everything in the Bible. And it's a composite whole and it's just beautiful the way it comes together. So now what we're talking about has to do with the offer that Jesus is making to Israel.

And I want to turn to we've spent some time in Acts 2 and I want you to come to Acts chapter 3 this is one of the most telling favorite portions of scripture in my mind in all of the Bible.

Jesus has already ascended back to heaven the day of Pentecost has already occurred 3,000 have responded positively to the message that Peter preached an explanation of what happened the miracle of everybody being able to hear and speak in languages that they did not know that has occurred and all of those things are behind us but now we are still very early on into the book of Acts and we're in chapter 3 and I want you to be reminded of this also that all that we are talking about is exclusively Jewish.

[12:00] there are no what we would call Christians involved in it and people are thinking well on the day of Pentecost didn't those 3,000 people become Christians?

No! No! They didn't become Christians Christianity didn't even exist then. What those 3,000 Jews did was they became believing Jews they became Messianic Jews in that they embraced Jesus as their Messiah their Jewishness wasn't changed one whit and nobody even considered that being a possibility that was not an issue and Jewishness is going to be the core of everything in the book of Acts up to about chapter 10 and we're talking about 8 to 10 years 8 to 10 years after Jesus was resurrected there were no what we call Christians who even existed all Jews and of all of the Jews there were Jews who believed Jesus was the Messiah and they put their trust and faith in him which was a tiny minority of Jews as opposed to all of the other Jews which constituted the majority of the nation of Israel that did not believe Jesus was the Messiah and they did not put their faith in him that configuration still exists today we've got a tiny minority of Jews in the world that embraced Jesus as the Messiah and they are referred to as Christian Hebrews or Christian Jews because they are Christians and they are also Jews but in the Bible they represented 100% of those who had faith in Jesus as the Messiah for the first day of tenure and let me just run this by you to solidify that remember the very first Gentile that came that came to faith in

Jesus as the Messiah and as his Lord didn't occur until the tenth chapter of the book of Acts that was Cornelius he was a Roman army officer a Gentile who had come to the conviction that Israel one true God was the only God and he rejected all of the Roman gods that all of his other soldiers etc.

believed it so that in itself was an enormous revelation to me I just thought in Acts 2 that's the beginning of the church that's the beginning of Christianity and right from the very beginning there are 3,000 Christians all at once there on the day of Pentecost wrong wrong wrong but that is by far and away the majority opinion not only of Roman Catholics but of Protestants as well so what I want to point out to you that is so critical is that the miraculous the miracles that Jesus is performing all through the book of the four gospels is all related to the kingdom the kingdom the kingdom the kingdom and to verify that he was who he claimed to be he had to bring kingdom conditions with him remember he said on one occasion in the gospels if I by the finger of

[15:51] God cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come unto you and when he said also the kingdom of heaven is in your midst he was talking about himself he wasn't talking about anything else he brought kingdom conditions with him everywhere he went and when he was crucified that was not the end of him we tend to think that it was or at least many think that it was and that now everything has changed from Israel to the church well that's going to happen but it hasn't happened here in Acts 2 that's the important point and what I want you to notice here in well let's look before we go to chapter 3 let's look at this chapter 2 again look at verse 43 if you would 243 and everyone and the everyone of course all the

Jews who were involved everyone kept feeling a sense of awe they were struck by what was happening by the atmosphere by the attitudes of everybody it was a wonderful incredible time they were filled with awe and we are told that many wonders and signs the word signs is just another word for miracles and it comes from the Greek word semion and it means it's the word from which we get the English word semaphore which means the sign or the signal that's being sent and these signs of course were miracles were taking place through the apostles and all those who had believed were together had all things in common they began selling their property and possessions why in the world would they do that and they were sharing them with all as anyone might have need hey guys those are kingdom requirements this is what

Jesus told the rich young ruler well all those things I've done I've kept from my youth up Jesus said well if you would behold you sell everything that you have and come and follow me and the young man bailed out he said well I can't do that you know and he left but Jesus was telling him what the qualifications were for the kingdom and that's what they are experiencing here and they are beginning to put it into practice they are beginning to develop this kingdom mentality and it is infectious and they are doing what Jesus said when he was here before in the gospels they are meeting those qualifications they're doing what he told the rich young ruler to do and we read that one day and day by day continuing with one mind in the temple breaking bread from house to house they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart praising God and having favor with all the people and the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved and I know the King James reference the King James says the Lord was adding to the church daily and this was a church because a church is a called out assembly for a specific purpose or common purpose and this was a church but there's a church that is Israel called out of Egypt they are called a church there's a ragtag bunch that was in Acts chapter 19 that were causing a ruckus in the Coliseum they are called a church because they were called out to be that and by the way guys let me just inject this the Septuagint the Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament Hebrew into Greek and the reason it was made was because so many Jews over over a period of hundreds of years had been scattered throughout the whole Mediterranean world because invaders would come in and a lot of the Jews would take home by the way we're seeing this in Ukraine today Russia comes in and what happens to the Ukrainians they're leaving the country by the tens of thousands and that's exactly what happened to Israel over a period of hundreds of years they would have different invaders come in and the Jews would say I'm getting out of here I'm heading for something and they'd go all throughout the Mediterranean world and start families and make settlements and eventually when they could they would come back to Jerusalem to keep a feast day at the temple and that's why you have that long list of different people in [21 : 04] Acts 2 from all over the Mediterranean world and they had a religion in common but they all spoke different languages and that was the reason for their speaking in tongues in languages that they did not know so all of this comes into play and it is very very critical to understand this concept and when when I lost my train of thought all right back back to verse 47 the Lord was adding to their number day by day those were being saved and what I was saying about in this Septuagint this translation of the Hebrew language which these Jews that had left the country could no longer speak but what were they speaking many of them were speaking Greek and the reason they were is because Greek had become the universal language Greek was in the first century what English is today you'd be amazed how many people in Europe right now and Asia speak pretty good English because English has become the world language back then it was Greek and in the Septuagint translation that is Hebrew into Greek guess how many times the word church is found 40 40 times in the Old Testament church yes because the meaning of the word has nothing to do with what we commonly identify as the church it simply means any group any group that is a called out or a beckoned group of people who have a common purpose or common goal that's a church and we don't call that a church but that's what the Bible calls a church so whenever the term church is used it is almost automatically assumed that it always means the same thing but very often it does not so having kept that in mind I want you to come over now to chapter 3 and this situation that we have developing here is one of my very favorites chapter 3 Peter and John going up to the temple to the ninth hour this is 3 o'clock in the afternoon the hour of prayer certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along whom they used to set down every day at the gate of this was a daily ritual that's how this guy made his living it was by begging and it was considered a perfectly honorable occupation back then today we've kind of look upon people who are begging with a jaundiced eye you know like it's why don't you get a job this kind of thing but it was considered very respectable back then especially if a man was incapacitated and this man certainly was because he's in his 40s and he was born from his mother's womb an invalid unable to walk so every day this guy's family or neighbors or friends who had befriended him would gather up this guy put him on a stretcher carry him from his home to this place in the temple he probably didn't live too far away and there they would deposit him same place every day he had dibs on this spot this was a choice spot for begging because when you situated yourself there in this religious setting the opportunity for a little bit of sympathy a little bit of recognition from people who were coming there to do religious things it would be a good place to

situate yourself for begging and that's exactly what this guy did and he was there every day and we are told that he saw

Peter in verse 3 and John about to go into the temple he began asking to receive all this guy probably clothed in rags sitting there by himself cross legged holding out a cup alms alms for the poor people would go by and they would drop in a few coins and he would say thank you and some days he would have good takes some days it wouldn't be that much but he is a regular fixture there and everybody knows this guy and Peter says in verse 6 I do not possess silver and gold but what I do have I give to you in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene walk and I can just visualize this in my own mind Peter reaches down and that man holds up his hand and Peter reaches down and grabs that man by the hand and yanks on him and he comes right up off the ground and he's standing there holding

Peter's hand can you imagine the expression on this guy's face he can't believe what's happening to him and he stands there and his eyes are as big as saucers this is a man who has never stood on his feet in his life and he's in his forties he stands there and he looks at Peter he looks at his legs he stomps his feet he wonder he has to wonder am I dreaming this is this real he just can't fathom what has happened to him and with the leap verse 8 he stood upright and began to walk we all know if somebody has been hospitalized for a long period of time from a serious illness and hasn't been able to get out of bed first thing they have to do is learn to walk all over again you would think well that's something that you just automatically know if you haven't done it for so long the muscles and the nerves and everything in your legs they need conditioning they need strengthening and you do it gradually doesn't come to you all at once it's just like a baby starting to walk all over again and he is leaping and praising

[27 : 50] God and all the people saw him walking and praising God and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate that's that's the way that gate was identified it was probably the more outstanding one from from the standpoint of its beauty of the temple to beg off and they were filled with wonder this is the continuation of miracles and you know what that tells me it's also the continuation of the kingdom and the opportunity because when that opportunity is withdrawn the miracles that accompany it are withdrawn also that's why today contrary to what the Pentecostals tell us and the faith healers tell us this is not the day and age of miracles and when a real miracle happens today it is not the norm it is the exception it is rare miracles we are not saying no one can experience a miracle today because that isn't true

God can do any miracle anytime he wants to any way he wants to for anyone he wants to but what we are saying and this is very important is that the miraculous is not the norm today when the kingdom was preached it was the norm it had become the norm wherever Jesus went wherever the apostles went miracles accompanied them and it was outstanding that is that is the bread and butter of the kingdom what is our bread and butter we walk by faith not by sight what do miracles involve sight you've heard the expression seeing is believing we are called upon to believe without seeing why do we believe simply because we embrace the message of truth and we do not require miracles to support it this is why the

Jew requires a sign but we are not to require signs Paul said we walk by faith not by sight that simply means we do what we do we believe what we believe simply because God has revealed it and he doesn't have to back it up with a miracle remember when doubting Thomas came on the scene Jesus said Thomas because you have seen me you have believed blessed are those who having not seen yet shall believe and that's you and me and I've never seen a real miracle I've seen some things that I think came pretty close but I'm talking about the kind of miracles in the Bible I've never seen anybody raised from the dead I've never seen anybody that was born blind healed like the man in John 9 I've never seen that I'm not saying it can't happen but I am saying this if it does happen it's really out of the norm so what we've got here is and this is so important guys what we've got here is not a conclusion of the kingdom ending with the crucifixion no no what we've got is a continuation of the opportunity for Israel to still embrace the kingdom even though they crucified their Messiah the hand of God's opportunity remains extended to them if they will embrace it now let's read on when Peter saw this in verse 12 he replied to the people men of Israel notice who is addressing there's anybody else there you won't find a Gentile here in the temple Gentiles Gentiles who would defile the Jewish temple were subject to execution on the spot these are all Jews and he says men of Israel why do you marvel at this or why do you gaze at us as if by our own power that is Peter and John or piety we had made him walk the God of Abraham

Isaac and Jacob the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus who by now is in heaven he's already ascended to chapter 1 the one whom you delivered up and you disowned him in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him but you disowned the holy and righteous Peter is calling these people out he's saying you were among those who were shouting out crucify him crucify him this is the same one you put to death the prince of life the one whom God raised from the dead a fact to which we are witnesses and on the basis of faith in his name this one that you rejected it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know and the faith which comes through him Jesus has given him this man this perfect health in the presence of you all and by the way I've made a note of that perfect health thing I don't know whatever else this guy might have had wrong with him but I think that was fixed too because when Jesus heals somebody it isn't just from a sore thumb or whatever he heals the whole body and now brethren look at verse 17 I know that you acted in ignorance just as your rulers did also he's talking about the scribes and Pharisees the rulers but the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets what was it that his Christ his Messiah should suffer remember on the road to

[34 : 05] Emmaus Jesus confronted the two apostles they weren't apostles they were disciples afterwards and he said you were foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the Messiah ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory his Christ should suffer he has thus fulfilled so now what okay now what and what Peter is saying is Israel the ball is in your court what are you going to do well the ball was in their court before and they said crucify and fellas the point that needs to be made here is the ball is still in their court and he is telling them if you will now meet the conditions that you refuse to meet earlier look at what will happen repent change your mind reverse yourself hey guys you were wrong and you know you were wrong what are you going to do about it you repent you change your mind and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing making everything new may come from the presence of the Lord how's that going to happen and that he may send

Jesus the Christ appointed for you well listen he just left about 12 days earlier he just left in Acts chapter 1 and in Acts chapter 2 10 days later after Jesus ascended with Pentecost this is right after Pentecost Peter is actually finishing his message he's continuing his message and it was the same message that he delivered in chapter 2 all he's doing here is adding to it and he says if you repent God's magic bullet if you repent he will send Jesus the Christ appointed for you whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things think of that this is this is an incredible offer now some say that Peter never made the re-offer of a kingdom and all

I can say is what is this it looks like an ironclad kind of guarantee all you have to do is what you refuse to do earlier where are you now what say you now powerful message 3,000 responded to it on the day of Pentecost and we wonder how many are going to respond to it here but look at what happens look at chapter 4 as they were speaking to the people the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees who are they this is the deep state this is the deep state these are the same people who collaborated with Judas for the betrayal and eventual execution of Jesus same people they came upon them being greatly disturbed because

Peter and John were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead what was the standard byline what was the story then the way John's gospel closes out and the way the other gospels close out Luke and so on is that the official explanation the deep state explanation this is the fake news explanation what happened to the body of Jesus while the guards were sleeping the friends of Jesus came and stole the body away and the text says and that was believed among the Jews to this day and that was as of the day that Luke was writing that in his gospel which was many years later and fellas 2,000 years later that's still the standard explanation for the disappearance of the body of

Jesus among the Jews today is that his friends came and stole away the body there was no resurrection and now they are preaching this message and the text goes on to say they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day for it was already evening but many of those who had heard the message believed and the number of the men came to be about 5,000 this indicates that there were 2,000 added to the 3,000 that Peter preached to on the day of Pentecost now the number is growing and the deep state is becoming very nervous the whole name of the game is we've got to shut these guys down and here is where the persecution begins and you need to know this it is

[40 : 11] Jews persecuting Jews no Gentiles involved at all these are all Jews questions or comments anyone Larry I'm sorry I'm not hearing what Oh of course well it was an attempt to it was an intention to silence these men because this thing was spreading and they were getting nervous about it and they knew that if enough Jewish people believe this and sign on with this how is that going to affect the Romans who are occupying Israel they are going to view this as an insurrection brewing and that's exactly what it would have been and these

Jews who serve at the pleasure the deep state served at the pleasure of Pontius Pilate who was Rome's representative and it was as much as Pilate says listen you guys you can keep your positions you can keep your income and all the rest of the stuff you are the religious leaders of your people but I want to tell you this you keep your people in line because if you don't we will and Rome always had more and that puts them in a threatened position with the establishment Roger did you have something was it the covenant that God made with Abraham way back when Israel was always broken but God has not so he has to finish that covenant with Abraham and that he has to straighten the Jews out and all that and come back set up the king that is actually the Abrahamic covenant is really the basis of everything Jewish I mean that's everything that's everything Jewish and it is what we believe to be an unconditional covenant it is a covenant that is based on the faithfulness the word and the integrity of God it is not based on the behavior and the performance of Israel that's what makes it so dramatic because if it were it would be exactly what most Gentiles today think it was that Israel fumbled the ball and they're gone permanently and the church has taken the place that's that's by far and away the official position of Christendom and all we're saying is no it isn't that God still has a planned program for the Jews and this is all involved guys but it is so critical that we get a handle on this because it impacts everything regarding the present and the future so thank you for your kind attention as as as as as as as as as as as