

Walking by the spirit: The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

Turn to Acts 1

I would like to recognize and thank John Brown for his work and assistance in bringing to light the importance of the Kingdom of God. Without him this teaching would not take place.

The book of Acts begins with the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:1

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,
2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4 And while ~~staying~~ *(eating with them, taking the covenant of salt)* with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;

5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Jesus appeared to the apostles during 40 days and spoke with or taught them about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God must have been very important as these were the last days that Jesus was here on the earth with them in his new body.

After all this teaching, on the last day that he was with them before his ascension, they asked him (in verse 6) “...Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”. It seems that the apostles still did not get the point. Restoring the kingdom to Israel is an event which takes place during the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus was concerned about them receiving instruction on the kingdom of God. So, as a good teacher, he does not become angry, but redirects them back to the instructions of the kingdom of God. He replies in verse 7, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority”. In this verse you can perceive plainly the kingdom of God, for it is God who rules. It is God who determines when the kingdom of Heaven is restored.

The last instruction that Jesus personally imparted to the apostles is in verse 8;

Acts 1:8

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Turn to Acts 19

These are the instructions they were to carry out, which would initiate their participation in the

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kingdom of God. After they received power, they would become witnesses even to the end of the earth.

Acts 19:8

8 And he (*Paul*) entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Over the course of three months, Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue about what – politics, the law, economics, his theological opinions? No! He spoke boldly about the kingdom of God!

Turn to Acts 28:23

23 When they (*the religious Jews*) had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

25 And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

26 “ ‘Go to this people, and say, You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.

27 for this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’

28 therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,

31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Paul expounded to the religious Jews from morning until evening about the kingdom of God. For two years after that he proclaimed the kingdom of God to whoever would come and listen.

The book of Acts closes with the kingdom of God. Obviously it is an important truth which cannot be fully taught in a single teaching. So, this teaching will serve only as an introduction to this expansive and important subject.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15

God had Paul leave us a summary of the gospel of the kingdom of God which Paul taught over the course of his service as a visionary.

The kingdom of God spans all time, so it would include events from the beginning of this world to the end of this world.

1 Corinthians 15:20

20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

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1 Corinthians 15:22

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Verses 20 and 21 speak about Adam, the first man and his fall, when his authority over the kingdoms of this world was transferred to the devil. This is how mankind became subject to fear, bondage, sin and death. Christ is the promised savior from the fear, bondage, sin and death. Death could not hold him captive. God did not abandon mankind, but provided a deliverer, a savior.

Then the resurrection from the dead is mentioned. However, verse 22 changes slightly and says "...so also in Christ shall all be made alive". If the word "resurrection" was used in verse 22, your whole bible would fall to pieces. The reason is that not all who belong to Christ will participate in a resurrection.

Verse 23 lists the order in which the believers will be made alive. Christ is first. Then those believers who were born from above and fell asleep will be gathered together with the believers who are alive at the time. They will be brought together to meet Christ in the clouds. This is NOT a resurrection. After that, when the Day of the Lord begins, Christ comes back to the earth with his saints, who are all the born from above believers, including us. At that time there will occur an event called the resurrection of the just. That is when the old testament saints and the saints under the law who were executed are resurrected. Verse 23 includes both events, the gathering together of the born from above saints and the resurrection of the just.

1 Corinthians 15:24

24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

The events of verses 24 – 26 include the resurrection of the unjust and what has been called the "great white-throne judgment" when the devil and all that belong to him are judged and punished. Then death itself is destroyed.

Hebrews 2:14 declares:

14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

You see in this verse that God lovingly provided for our deliverance by the accomplishments of His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ delivered us from the exercised power of the devil spirits of fear, bondage and death. Death is not a friend, it is an enemy which will be destroyed.

1 Corinthians 15:27

27 For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him

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who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Christ is in every verse of this summary, except for verse 26. This is appropriate for he is the subject of the word of God.

The kingdom of Heaven is a period of time under the kingdom of God, when the man, Christ Jesus is actually on the earth. All authority and power from God is delegated to Christ so that he can rule. All authority and power is delegated to Christ right now, but he is not physically present upon the earth. Therefore, the kingdom of Heaven is in abeyance until he returns with his saints on the Great Day of the Lord.

After Christ has accomplished the task of destroying every rule and every authority and power, he hands the kingdom back to God. At that point we will have a direct relationship with God. Until that time, Christ Jesus our Lord is our mediator.

This is a tremendous summary of the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Turn to Colossians 1

Lets consider what a kingdom is. It is a monarchy, which is a nation or state having a monarchical government. This means that there is an undivided rule or absolute sovereignty by a single person. That person is normally called a "king". In this case, the kingdom of God is a parliamentary monarchy because there is a parliament and a ruler. Parliament is the ekklesia and God is the ruler.

Colossians 1:13

13 He (*God*) has delivered (*rescued*) us from the domain (*rulership, kingdom*) of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15

Today, we are citizens in the kingdom of His beloved son! We have all the rights and privileges which are due to any citizen of this kingdom. This includes the right to vote in the parliament. Examples of the parliament in action include the records in Acts 6 and Acts 15.

There are economic systems within a kingdom. These are in evidence in the book of Acts as well.

1 Corinthians 15:50

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Turn to Ephesians 1

The kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom, it is a SPIRITUAL kingdom! We are citizens in this spiritual kingdom because God rescued us. It is not our flesh that gives us access to move and function in this kingdom. It is by way of the new spiritual self which God created in union with Christ that we are able to move and function within the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 1:19

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is

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named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:22

22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,
23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 2:4

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,
5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—
6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

Turn to Romans 13

Today, we are seated with Christ, above the rulers of the darkness of this world. Where? In a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom!

Galatians 5:18 says:

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

As you walk by the new spiritual self you are not under any religious law or commandments contained in ordinances, regardless of the stately religious organizations which maintain such laws. There is no Godly spiritual significance to any religious organization. This is an extremely important truth to understand and master. No believer who walks by the spirit has any obligation to any religious organization, religious office or officer, religious regulation, policy or procedure. No believer has the right or ability to give an oath of allegiance to any religious organization or to any other man, because we belong to Christ!

Romans 13:1 (KJV)

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God:

We have just established that we live and move by way of the new spiritual self in a spiritual kingdom. The authorities mentioned here are not the worldly political institutions and authorities. The names of these higher powers are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28

28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

Who does the appointing or the ordaining? GOD does the appointing, NOT man. This is the kingdom of God, not man.

So, how do we know or recognize the “higher powers”? We recognize them by our new spiritual selves; we walk by the spirit. 2 Corinthians 5:16 says that we do not regard or know anyone by the flesh. This applies to ourselves, Christ, and the “higher powers”. Man made titles, appointments, offices, and name-tags mean absolutely nothing. They have no Godly spiritual significance.

Man made trappings of authority and power make it easy for people to walk by the flesh and SIMULATE walking by the spirit. However, they are walking by the flesh and are performing the

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works of the flesh.

Turn to Acts 26. This is the record of Paul's calling as an apostle

Acts 26:14

14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

15 And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'

16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,

17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you

18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Notice that Paul was sent to *people*, not to religious or political institutions. He was not called to build a religious organization or institution. The only organization he worked with is the body of Christ.

Turn to Acts 13

Next we will examine two records of Paul's preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. This will illustrate why we do not hear anything about the kingdom of God in the world today. This gospel is a very repugnant message to those in the religious realm.

Here in Acts 13, Paul is preaching in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia. In the audience are both Jews and Gentiles. We pick up the record in verse 23.

Acts 13:23

23 Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. **24** Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

26 "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. **27** For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. **28** And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. **29** And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. **30** But God raised him from the dead, **31** and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. **32** And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, **33** this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, " 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'

34 And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, " 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.'

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Acts 13:35

35 Therefore he says also in another psalm, “ ‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, **37** but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. **38** Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, **39** and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Do you realize what Paul has just done? He has declared the wonderful good news of their deliverance from the law of commandments contained in ordinances; he has declared the good news of their release from the curse of the law and all the penalties of the law. He has declared their freedom from the bondage of sin and death. In effect, he has declared the end of their religion, their religious rites, observances, obligations, offices and organizations! To the Jews this meant the end of the temple and the kingdom of Judea!

Religion and the religious rulers put our savior to death. After he was raised and was ascended, it was religion that was brought to an end!

Acts 13:40

40 Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

41 “ ‘Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.’ ”

42 As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. **43** And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

Turn to Acts 17

Now we will consider a record where Paul declared to a Gentile audience the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Here, Paul is in Athens, speaking to the Athenians in the Areopagus.

Acts 17:22

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are ~~very religious~~ (*given to devil worship*). **23** For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. **24** The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, **25** nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. **26** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, **28** for “ ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “ ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ **29** Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or

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silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

Acts 17:30

30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, **31** because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

The gospel of the kingdom of God exposes the ignorant and ineffective idol worship of the Gentiles which continues, little changed, to this very day. God does not request, but he commands that people everywhere to repent. Repent from what? Repent from the religious worship of the physical realm. Repent of the ignorant error that God lives in a physical building or a physical organization. Repent from the ignorant error that it is possible to serve God by means of the senses realm. Ladies and Gentlemen, the end of religion, the exposure of the futility of idolatry is endorsed by the resurrection of the man Jesus Christ.

As you are led by the spirit, you are manifesting your freedom in Christ, your freedom from all religious bondage, religious laws of commandments contained in ordinances.

Turn to Romans 6

So, what is our response to the gospel of the kingdom of God? What are we to do?

Romans 6:5

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. **13** Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. **14** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Turn to Galatians 3

Galatians 5:16 says

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

That is HOW we fulfill the instructions given in Romans 6.

Galatians 3:27

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

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We put off the old things of the flesh, our race, our social status, our gender. We strip it all away and crucify it with our old self. God does not leave us naked, but he clothes us with righteousness, he clothes us in Christ. We are in union with Christ and are identified with HIM, NOT our old self of the flesh.

God loved us and delivered us by the accomplishments of His son Jesus Christ. Our response is to put on the new spiritual self and walk in newness of life, which is walking by the spirit. This is how we love God, and how we are to love the brethren.

It was important to Jesus that the apostles be taught about the gospel of the kingdom of God.

It was important to Paul to declare to everyone the gospel of the kingdom of God.

It is important to God that this gospel of the kingdom of God be declared once again in our day and time!