

When will the Kingdom be Restored to Israel? Answers in Acts 1:6-11 and 3:12-21

Acts 1

- v 6 So when they had come together, they asked him,
"Lord, will you at this time **restore** (Greek: *apokathistēmi*)¹
the kingdom

to Israel?"
- v 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons
that the Father has fixed by his own authority.⁶
- v 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.
- v 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went,
behold, two men stood by them in white robes,
- v 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

This **Jesus**, who was taken up from you into heaven,
will come in the same way as you saw him go into **heaven**."

Acts 3

- v 12a And when Peter saw it he addressed the people:
- v 21b until the time for **restoring** (Greek: *apokatastasis*)^{2,3}
all the things
about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.⁴
- v 12b "Men **of Israel**....
- v 19 Repent therefore, and turn again,⁵ that your sins may be blotted out,
- v 20 that times⁷ of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,
and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, **Jesus**,
- v 21a whom **heaven** must receive

End Notes

¹ The Greek verb *apokathistēmi* (restore) is used frequently in the Septuagint of the eschatological restoration of Israel:

Therefore, thus says the LORD, "If you return, then **I will restore** (LXX: *apokathistēmi*) you.... (Jer 15:19).

"Therefore behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.' For **I will restore** (LXX: *apokathistēmi*) them to their own land which I gave to their fathers." (Jer 16:14-15)

"For I will set My eyes on them for good, and **I will bring** (LXX: *apokathistēmi*) them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. 'I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.'" (Jer 24:6-7)

"Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, **will return** (LXX: *apokathistēmi*) to their former state, and you with your daughters **will also return** (LXX: *apokathistēmi*) to your former state..... Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you". (Ezek 16: 55, 60)

See Richard N, Longenecker, "Acts," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (rev, ed; ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 10:765-66.

² "In Luke's two books, members of this word family appear only in these two passages and in Luke 6:10, describing Jesus' healing of a man whose withered hand "was restored." Dennis E. Johnson, "Acts 6: The Consummation of the Kingdom," *Modern Reformation* 20 (Nov-Dec, 2011): 25. The word "restore" means returning something to its original state as illustrated in Jesus returning the man's withered arm to it's Acts 3:12-21a

original state. It does not mean creating something new to replace the old. Jesus did not create a new arm to replace the withered one.

³ F. F. Bruce states, "This restoration is called the 'regeneration' in Matthew 19:28." "And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt 19:28). F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 112. The restoration would thus be a reference to the restoration of the millennial reign of Christ where the opening words of Revelation 20:4 are an apparent reference to the disciples sitting on thrones in judgment: "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

⁴ Prophecies of a restoration in the Old Testament:

"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:1-6)

"Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him. Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes. (Isa 40:9-11)

"Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. For thus says the LORD, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them. Fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans." Men will buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland and in the cities of the Negev; for I will restore their fortunes,'" declares the LORD." (Jer 32:37-44)

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"Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons" Acts 3:12-21a

and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people." (Ezek 37:21-27)

"How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled. I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, And I will not come in wrath. They will walk after the LORD, He will roar like a lion; Indeed He will roar And His sons will come trembling from the west. They will come trembling like birds from Egypt And like doves from the land of Assyria; And I will settle them in their houses," declares the LORD. (Hos 11:8-11)

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine And all the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God. (Amos 9:13-15)

See Craig S. Keener, *The Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 332.

⁵ F. F. Bruce writes, "...the whole house of Israel, now as on the day of Pentecost, received a call to reverse the verdict of Passover Eve, and to accord Jesus united acknowledgement as Messiah" (*The Book of Acts [The New International Commentary of the New Testament]*; ed. Ned B. Stonehouse; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954], 92).

⁶ The parallel verse to Acts 1:7 is Matthew 24:36, where Jesus says in speaking of his second coming, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." In other words, the kingdom of God will be restored to Israel at the second coming of Christ.

⁷ The plural "times" may refer to the length of time as in the expression "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). See I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary (The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*; ed. R. V. G. Tasker; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1980), 93.