

Acts. c. AD 61

1. Luke wrote Acts to give the history of the spread of the early Church.
2. It shows that eschatology was an integral part of the apostles' teaching.

### I. Acts 1.6-11

### II. Acts 2.16-21

### III. Acts 3.19-21

### IV. Acts 8.12

A. Philip was preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ

1. If this does not refer to the Gospel, what was Philip preaching?
2. The Kingdom has several aspects, including the Spiritual Aspect and the Millennial Aspect

“Those who trust in Christ become partakers in His spiritual rule over them now and eventually will enter into His future earthly millennial rule.”<sup>1</sup>

B. Remember that the Church age includes the present (Spiritual) aspect of God's Kingdom

### V. Acts 10.42

A. God appointed (ordained) Christ as the Judge of the living and the dead

B. This is a recurring theme in the apostles' preaching and should be in ours (compare Ac 17.31, Rm 2.16, 2 Tim 4.1, 1 Pt 4.5)

### VI. Acts 14.21-22

A. The context is the first missionary journey, as Paul and Barnabas cycle back through the new churches they planted, strengthening them for the days ahead.

B. They warn that believers must endure many tribulations to enter into the Kingdom of God (Note the plural)

1. The “kingdom of God” refers to a future aspect of the kingdom

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ac 8.12.

2. Believers in this age are a part of the Kingdom (Spiritual aspect)

3. The warning has no reference to the Great Tribulation

C. Persecution and other troubles train believers in this age.

## VII. Acts 15.13-18

A. The context is the Jerusalem Council, where the believers are discussing the Gentile question

1. James, the half brother of Jesus, gives a summation and conclusion including this teaching concerning God's plan for the coming ages

2. In the present age God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name

3. "After these things," God will restore the Kingdom to the Jews [Messianic aspect — Davidic kingdom] (16)

4. The restoration of the Jews during the Millennial reign will bring blessing upon all the nations. (17)

B. The quotation is from Amos 9.11-12 showing that OT revelation agreed with NT conclusions

"Neither Amos nor any other prophet said Gentiles had to become Jews to enjoy the blessings of salvation (cf. Rom. 11:12)."<sup>2</sup>

1. Note, James does not mean to say the inclusion of Gentiles means the prophecy of Amos is fulfilled.

2. Nor does James mean that we should only look for Gentile inclusion exclusively in the future, as Amos prophesies (connecting the blessing with the Davidic kingdom)

3. Rather, the prophecy of Amos, predicting future blessing to Gentiles, is consistent with the present inclusion of the Gentiles in the church: "Amos agrees."

<sup>2</sup> Constable, Ac 15.15.

**VIII. Acts 17.31**

- A. The context is Paul's sermon in Athens
- B. Paul preached in Athens that God has appointed a day of Judgment for the world
- C. Again, Paul preaches Jesus Christ as the Judge, with the proof in His resurrection

**IX. Acts 19.8**

- A. Paul preached in the Ephesian synagogue for three months
- B. He was persuading concerning the Kingdom of God, which includes this age
- C. Compare Philip and his preaching in Samaria (Ac 8.12)

**X. Acts 20.24-25**

- A. Paul told the Ephesian elders that his ministry was to testify the Gospel of the grace of God
- B. Again, he reminds them that he also preached the Kingdom of God among them
- C. This must mean that the two terms are related (a reference in this age to the Spiritual aspect)

**XI. Acts 23.6**

- A. Paul is on trial before the Sanhedrin after the arrest in Jerusalem
- B. He appeals to the Pharisees: "I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead"
- C. The comment is more than a mere tactic to divide his court, pitting Pharisees against Sadducees
- D. The central issue over which they oppose him is Jesus Christ, whose resurrection proves Paul's doctrine (and its consistency with the OT)
- E. Paul will make the same point with Agrippa (Ac 26.6-8, 23) — see below

**XII. Acts 24.11-25**

- A. The context is Paul's next trial, before the Roman governor, Felix
- B. Paul testifies before Felix that there will be two kinds of resurrection; of the righteous, and of the unrighteous (15)
  - 1. As noted, the Pharisees likewise believed in a resurrection of the righteous
  - 2. Nevertheless, there is also a resurrection of the unrighteous — for judgement (see Dan 12.2; Mt 25.31–33, 46; Jn 5.28–29; Rev 20.12–15)
- C. He maintains that the charge against him is a spiritual one: teaching the resurrection of the dead; there was no legal charge (17-21)
- D. Afterward he reasoned with Felix about righteousness, self-control, and the Judgment which is to come (25)

**XIII. Acts 26.6-8; 22-23**

- A. The context is the trial before Agrippa, the last trial in Acts
- B. Again, Paul testifies to Agrippa that the charge is teaching the hope of Israel, that is, the resurrection of the dead (6-8)
- C. The OT said that the Messiah should suffer, rise from the dead, and show forth light to Israel and to all the nations (22-23)
  - 1. Christ himself is the first to proclaim the light of resurrection
  - 2. Christ's message is to both Jews and Gentiles

**XIV. Acts 28.20-31**

- A. Paul testifies to the Jews at Rome that the charge against him is the hope of Israel (20)
- B. When they meet with him, he does his best to persuade them on his familiar themes (23)
  - 1. Solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God

“The term ‘kingdom of God’ probably means the same thing here as it usually does in the Gospels, namely Messiah’s rule on earth during the millennial kingdom (cf. 1.3–8; 8.12; 14.22; 19.8; 20.25; 28.31).”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Constable, Ac 28.23.

2. Trying to persuade them concerning Jesus (the key to the kingdom)
  3. All based on Moses and the Prophets
- C. Paul continued his themes during his imprisonment: preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (31)

### **Summary statement concerning prophecy in Acts:**

The focus in Acts is the preaching – preaching the kingdom and Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is a major theme, especially for Jews, as it represents their hope from the prophets. What the Jews missed was that Jesus was the doorway into the kingdom. Without Jesus, no Kingdom. A side aspect of the kingdom was the inclusion of Gentiles, something the Jews ignored. These misperceptions contribute to the tension with the Jews through the apostolic period. In many ways, the book of Acts is the offer of the Kingdom to the Jews, but they must come through Christ to get it, something most of them are unwilling to do.