

## **Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide**

**Acts 1 sets the theme for the entire book, promise and prophecy**

**Acts 1 water and spirit baptism = the kingdom restored**

If we love our denomination more than personal Bible study, we have set our priorities incorrectly. Please note the emphasis on each one of us in this essential Bible study principle.

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* 2Ti 2:15.

The 2500 denominations in existence today have a Jewish worship structure and this came about by the evil which is replacement theology. This enemy of dispensational truth was birthed and nurtured in the denominational systems and has neutralized the power of God's word and words. Here is just one example showing why Acts 1 is widely misunderstood.

Passover/Unleavened Bread and the blood in Egypt.

These were the first step in Israel's national deliverance beginning her journey to the Promised Land. There she would be ruled by one of her own and enjoy divine bountiful provision.

Passover/Unleavened Bread and the blood in the Gospels.

These should be seen in exactly the same dispensational setting; however, replacement theology suggests that Passover and the blood in the Gospels is the first step in believers becoming New Covenant Christians and eventually going to heaven. This transfer of purpose is a monumental stumbling block to Bible understanding. Consider how this might have happened.

When the blood of Passover in the Exodus and the literal journey to the Promised Land is applied universally, it is mostly taught as a picture of the blood saving out of sin and death into Christ and glorious access to the Father. With this constant focus on their doctrinal application, their original prophetic dispensational clarity is lost and replaced with a Christian spiritualized version.

Passover and the blood were the first step in national salvation for Israel from Egypt to their Land, and when these prophetic steps unfolded up to Acts 28, the same divine purpose is in view. Israel's gathering into their Land happened at the Jericho Trumpets and the Trumpets of the Gospels, Acts and Revelation will bring the same result, that is Israel gathered into their Land. If we wish to preach the blood from Exodus 12, we preach the blood and Israel, not the blood and the church. Passover in the Exodus was about Israel and Passover in the Gospels was about Israel. Sadly, replacement theology now infects Christianity so much that Trumpets has been robbed of its dispensational truth and is spiritualized to mean Christians going to heaven.

Every step of Israel's Exodus into their Land was by the blood, and without work. These steps in their journey were embedded in their Feasts, celebrated annually. The Exodus and the Feasts looked forward to the greater Exodus when the One greater than Moses delivered them into His Kingdom, Deut.18:15.

Israel's original deliverance was by the shed blood and grace, not by her righteousness, Deut.7 & 9, and her future greater deliverance will not depend on their observance of the Law for righteousness.

The fact that Paul preached grace in the Acts period must be understood in the context of the Feasts he wrote about and observed. Look again at these steps celebrated in the Feasts, the steps in Israel's deliverance, and note the blood and the emphasis on no work. Grace is not of works, otherwise it is not grace.

Passover/Unleavened Bread/ Firstfruits, out of Egypt. blood, no work, Lev.23:5-14.

Weeks or Pentecost, gifts given, a preparation for the Kingdom, blood, no work, Mt Sinai. Lev.23:15-22.

Trumpets, Jericho, Israel gathered into the Land, blood, no work, Lev.23:23-25.

Day of Atonement, the Tabernacle offering acknowledged, solemnity, blood, no work, Lev.23:26-32.

Tabernacles/Booths, God's reign and provision, the manna ceased, rejoicing, blood, no work, Lev.23:33-43.

The Passover Cup, wine in the Kingdom and the New Covenant.

Israel concludes the Passover meal with the cry that next year it will be in Jerusalem. Here is Christ at Passover also looking forward to the New Covenant, the Kingdom on earth where he will enjoy wine with his disciples.

*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* Mat 26:27-29.

Three inseparable things leap from the page of Scripture, the blood, the New Covenant, and wine in the Father's Kingdom. The New Covenant is linked with the earthly Kingdom where wine is enjoyed. Replacement theology says all this is linked to believers today going to heaven. When Paul was a minister of the New Covenant, 2Cor.3:1-8, he was looking forward to wine with Christ in the earthly Kingdom.

Christ obviously believed Passover and his blood was the first step to Israel's restored Kingdom where the New Covenant would be in operation. This hope of Christ at Passover is not echoed in replacement theology, it is totally lost. The Old Covenant was not given at Passover but was the first step in the journey to receiving and observing it. The New Covenant was not given at Passover in the Gospels but was the first step in the journey to receiving and being blessed under it.

Jeremiah 30 and 31 speak of the New Covenant, and if we do not acknowledge the prophet's description of its impact on Israel, then replacement theology blinds us even further to Passover in the Gospels. Please note the New Covenant is Israel's regathering, with peace, God welling with them as their God, and corn wine and oil. We cannot separate God as the God of Israel, wine and Israel's regathering under the New Covenant. Here are some verses from Jeremiah.

*At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.* Jer.31:1.

*Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the*

*LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.* Jer.31:12.

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:* Jer.31:31.

The New Covenant is inseparable from Israel, from wheat, wine, oil, and flocks of animals.

While the Gospels and Acts are unswerving in their presentations of Israel and the divine purpose for the world, the denominational majority still hold to the replacement theology playbook which is the Gospels and Acts are the records of the early church. Acts 1 is therefore seen in this twisted frame, supposedly a time of adjustment for the disciples from the earthly program to the heavenly one. The denominational majority are not the only ones blinded by replacement theology, Mid-Acts is just another more sophisticated form since they continue to argue that the prophetic Feasts so prevalent in Paul during Acts, belong to "the body."

Acts opens with a question which sets the hope for the entire book. Christianity and Mid-Acts need to acknowledge the reality of this question which is inseparable from the New Covenant, God as the God of Israel, corn, wine and oil.

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Act 1:6.

This question is both intelligent and legitimate. The disciples already had their minds opened to understand the Scriptures, Lk.24:45 and the Lord had spoken to them for 40 days concerning the Kingdom of God after he had expressed the fact he would drink wine with them in the Kingdom.

The restoration of Israel's Kingdom was the purpose in view, but the question in Acts 1:6 is not the only basis for this conclusion. Consider these words of the Lord and their restored Kingdom implications.

*And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Act 1:4-6.

It is important that the flow from verse 4 to 6 is noted. After the mention of the two baptisms the question is asked about the restoration of the Kingdom. There is a link between water and Holy Spirit baptism, and the O.T. restoration of the Kingdom. Both baptisms in the prophetic Scriptures looked forward to the restoration of Israel's Kingdom. Which included the New Covenant and wine.

Water Baptism, the Kingdom, the New Covenant and wine.

John cried repent for the Kingdom of heaven was at hand and the water baptism of repentance opened the way to that Kingdom. John's ministry was prophesied in Isa.40 which is about the Lord ruling in Zion. Water baptism and potential for the restored Kingdom opens the Gospel records.

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.* Isa.40:3-5.

Hebs.9:10 speaks of the different water washings or baptisms of the first Tabernacle and we could include the washings required of Israel with various daily activities. Water washing or baptisms were part of the Exodus, and the Exodus pictured Israel's future glorious Kingdom. While water did not touch them, they were baptized in the sea on their way to the Kingdom, 1Cor.10.

Water baptism was a critical step for the priests prior to the service of the Tabernacle and within it. The Priests had to baptize themselves, some sacrifices had to be baptized, and we know the cleansing of the leper required the washing of clothes and himself, see Ex.29:4, 17, 30:18-19, 20 & Lev.14:9. Israel was purposed to be Kingdom of Priests, and a holy nation, Ex.19:6, Isa.61:6 and water baptism was inseparable from their priestly purpose. Like the Priests of old, they had to personally wash themselves as Isaiah called them to do.

*Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;* Isa.1:16. [Jer.4:14, Isa.55:7, see verse :1].

When Israel washed themselves in repentance, turning away from their evil ways, the Lord would turn to them and not only provide the divine cleansing but bring in the Kingdom where they would be by wine and milk without money. Here is more from Isa.1. Notice the word restore. Water baptism in type and prophecy looked to the future glorious, restored Kingdom.

*Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.* Isa.1:24-27.

The Holy Spirit baptism, the Kingdom, the New Covenant and wine.

The promise of the Father is found in the O.T. and this promise the disciples knew and understood. Here are a few references that speak of this glorious empowerment for the nation of Israel and those Gentiles associated with her. The incredible thing is, they are in contexts of Israel's restoration and implanting the New Covenant in their hearts.

*Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;* Isa.32:13-18.

*Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;* Isa.44:2-3.

*Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.* Isa.44:23.

*And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of*

*thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. Isa.59:20-21.*

*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. Isa.60:1.*

*Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Isa.60:5.*

*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Eze.36:25-27.*

*And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Eze.36:28-30.*

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. Joe.2:28-29.*

*So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim. Joe.3:17-18.*

Water and Spirit baptisms are in the prophetic contexts of Israel's regathering, restoration, the Law in their hearts via the New Covenant and the power from on high, and peace under the rule of the High-Priest King. The Land flowing with milk and honey in the beginning, is a Land abundantly blessed as the Lord calls for the increase of the corn, wine and oil, when he rules in Zion.

When the Lord took the wine at Passover and looked forward to drinking it new in the Kingdom, he linked Passover with Israel's regathering, the New Covenant and the wine with Trumpets. The Kingdom begins at Trumpets.

Water Baptism.

When the Lord spoke of John's water baptism of repentance the disciples understood it meant Israel's regathering, their Kingdom, the New Covenant and wine.

Holy Spirit Baptism.

When the Lord told of the coming power from on high; the baptism by the Holy Spirit, the disciples understood it meant Israel's regathering, their Kingdom, the New Covenant and wine.

This question was intelligent, relevant and genuine, it was the only question possible in the Israeli context of prophecy, the Gospels and Acts. Was this restoration taking place at that time.

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? Acts.1:6.*

The Scriptures speak to us that the divine purpose was the Kingdom of God clearly shown from John the Baptist, through the close of the Gospels, Acts 1 to Acts 28. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom depicted in Israel's history, in prophesy, in the ministry of the Lord and his servants during that time, and anticipated in the mighty signs and wonders given through them.

The Scriptures speak to us when we leave them in their original setting and reject replacement theology which introduces the church which is his body into passages that proclaim that wonderful Kingdom where the New Covenant and wine are blessings together.

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05-26-2025