

Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide

**Acts 1 sets the theme for the entire book, promise and prophecy
Acts 1 to Acts 28, no change, no transition, no progression.**

This lesson we revisit Acts chapter 1, a chapter very significant to those who love right division. It is an essential passage, setting the prophetic, earthly, Israeli theme threading through to chapter 28.

The dispensational theme in the book of Acts is also found in the scriptures written about events of that time, for example, Acts 1:11 is expanded in 1Thess.4:13-18 & Revelations. Acts includes Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, Hebrews, the general epistles and Revelations. The Acts period dispensational theme is not found in Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

If we dismiss Acts chapter 1 as being the records of misguided disciples unaware of the new church beginnings at Acts 2, then we will miss the critical dispensational information found within it and we will be misguided regarding the earthly setting of the entire book. Acts 1 is entirely Jewish in every way, and the restored Kingdom is evident in each feature.

Acts 1 is about Israel's Kingdom, events between the fulfilment of both Passover and Pentecost. Israel's Feasts are steps to the restored Kingdom.

Acts 1 is the near possibility of that Kingdom; Trumpets, the next Feast on the calendar, was expected when the Exodus "rapture" and the fall of Jericho would be fulfilled. Events related to the greater Kingdom in Israel.

Acts 1 is prophesy about the earthly Kingdom, not the things hidden in God of Ephesians and Colossians about heavenly places.

Acts 1 is the linking of the two baptisms for Israel, water and Spirit, both associated with the restored Kingdom.

Acts 1 is the Lord in resurrection, endorsed by many infallible proofs, see Roms.1:4. These signs were confirmation of his divinity and ministry. The signs for his faithful followers were the confirmation of the gospel they had heard and believed. The Lord first, the disciples next, and then the faithful who followed later. Supernatural gifts are associated with the restored Kingdom and would remain upon them unto the end, 1Cor.1:7-8.

Acts 1 is the restored Kingdom to Israel co-administered by the 12 disciples enthroned among the 12 tribes and empowered with supernatural gifts to do so. Later believers during Acts were also empowered to judge the world and Angels.

Acts 1 is regeneration, the restoration of Israel's Kingdom which is not the revelation of things hidden away from previous ages and generations.

The events of Acts 1 are those which occurred between Israel's Spring Feasts of Passover linked with Unleavened Bread, First fruits and Pentecost the last of the Spring Feasts. There are 50 days between First Fruits and Pentecost and Acts 1 and the entire book is inseparable from Israel's Festive calendar salvation. The Gospels and Acts are the exciting years when the prophetic Feasts were unfolding for the glory of Israel and their High Priest King. More on this shortly.

Luke opens Acts by looking back to his Gospel and in doing so provides an important fact-filled overlap not to be ignored.

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: Act 1:1-2.

Acts opens as a continuation of the things Christ began to do and teach, a continuing ministry of Christ to the circumcision through the disciples who were witnesses to his words and actions. This ministry of Christ to Israel was to be continued up until his return at Trumpets and beyond. These familiar passages are evidence of the specific direction and dispensational themes of the Gospels and Acts. Please connect the dots here.

... I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 15:24.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: Rom 15:8.

... go ... to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 10:6.

.....Jesus saith unto him, [Peter] Feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Joh 21:15-17.

The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) Act 10:36.

And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Act 10:39.

And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. Act 10:42.

(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Gal 2:8-9.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. Jas 1:1.

From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those temporarily residing abroad (in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia) 1Pet. 1:1. NET.

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. Luk 24:46-48. [1Cor.15:3-5].

.....I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt.28:20.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end [or completion] of the age." Mat 28:19-20. NET.

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 farthest parts of the earth." Act 1:8.

The commands given to the disciples at the close of the Gospel and opening of the Acts periods, directed them to the nation of Israel, including the dispersion, not to all people in all nations. Consider this statement by Peter.

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? Act 10:28-29.

Tradition has ignored this very tight dispensational framework these comparative Scriptures have built and taken to itself commands totally inappropriate for the present dispensation of the grace of God. The church which is his Body has not been commanded to go into all the world, to disciple all [the Jews in all] nations baptizing them the threefold name of God and has not been commanded to teach them to obey everything the Lord commanded his disciples. The Lord and his disciples were both sent to Israel. The church which is his body has not been sent to Israel, did not tarry in Jerusalem until it received power from on high since it was never promised any baptism of the Spirit by the Father in the things written aforetime.

The "great commission" contains a promise extending to the end of the world, or the completion of the age, this end of the world has been postponed. The word world is age [aion], and is found in Matt.24,

As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the [world] age?" Mat 24:3. NET.

The end of the age includes the events described and culminating in the sign of the Appearing, the Lord returning in the clouds, the Trumpet regathering of Israel. The great commission, given to those disciples who were to teach others to obey all the commands Christ had given them, looks to the restoration of Israel.

The "great commission" is not a command for, or the beginning of the church which is his body. The "great commission" looks to the restoration of Israel beginning when the Feast of Trumpets is fulfilled, the very Feast blasting through the writings of the Acts period.

Finally, we look at the close of Luke's Gospel to further connect dots.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Luk 24:44-51.

The Words which Christ spoke to them, the disciples, concerned "all things" which were written in the Law, the prophets, the psalms concerning Christ. The "all things" here concern his suffering, resurrection and the universal availability of repentance and forgiveness to Israel, see Acts10:43 & 2Pet.3:9. The hope in view of those O.T. Scriptures was Messiah reigning from the throne of his father David and the future restoration of Israel's Kingdom. These verses are also understood in context. The context being Christ was a minister to Israel; the disciples were sent to Israel and the "all things" included Christ and his Kingdom, that great restored Kingdom in Israel. These verses in Luke are not associated with the church which is his body which was hidden away from previous ages and generations, indeed, hidden in God.

Peter heard, believed and understood those words of his Lord in Lk.24, and he repeats them very clearly to the Jews and proselytes in Acts 3:17-26. When Peter preached the suffering of Christ, repentance and sins blotted out, it was accompanied with an assurance, that the restoration of the Kingdom was at hand. John the Baptist cried this, but now the true Lamb was slain. The suffering was over; the glory was near. The "all things" included the glory. Here are parallel Scriptures from Luke and Acts, remembering that Peter's gospel was preached in Jerusalem as per Lk.24.

Christ speaks about his suffering.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Lk.24:44.

Peter speaks about his suffering.

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Act 3:17-18.

Christ speaks about repentance and forgiveness.

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things Lk.24:47-48.

Peter speaks about repentance and forgiveness.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, Act 3:19.

Christ speaks about his glory.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. Lk.24:45-47.

Peter speaks about Christ's glory.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Act 3:19-20.

The "all things": included the restored Kingdom upon the repentance and conversion of the nation of Israel.

The Kingdom of prophesy included Gentiles, but it was Israel first that needed to repent for that Kingdom to be established. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the covenants made to Israel, raised up and sent Christ to Israel first.

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. Act 3:[17-] 25-26.

It was Jew first from the call of Abraham to Acts 28, and Luke's record coupled with Peter's testimony shows the rich redemptive truths are only linked to the earthly Kingdom program at that time and any Gentiles included at that time were included in the "times of refreshing".

Peter assures his Jewish audience, that upon repentance and conversion, the times of refreshing would come, and Christ would be sent back to them. The Lord had spoken about these things in Matt.24 when the Trumpet would sound and Israel regathered. Trumpets is the very next Feast on the Israeli calendar and features extensively in the writings of the Acts period, 1Cor.15, 1Thess.4 and Revelations. The New Testament is not understood if we fail to see the thread of the Feasts holding the dispensational theme in place unto Acts 28.

All things fulfilled is very important because our Lord's suffering, death, burial and resurrection are inseparable from the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Those of you who love fitting three days and three nights with the tradition of Friday and Sunday for the "easter" celebration, might like to research Passover that year, which by many accounts fell on Wednesday, not Friday.

When we ignore the fact that the Feasts of Israel were included in the "all things must be fulfilled", we have lost the dispensational setting of the Gospels and Acts. The Gospels and Acts are not the beginning of the church which is his body, they record the greater Exodus under the deliverance of the One Moses predicted, Duet.18:15.

Passover was the first step in Israel's national deliverance as recorded in Exodus 12 where the Lamb was reckoned for the house. Israel ate in haste and were to keep it as a memorial in the Land promised to their fathers. Passover was joined to Unleavened Bread which speaks of separation from Gentile dominion. The Passover blood did not initialize the church which is his Body, the blood brought salvation for the firstborn, not only in the house, but for the entire nation, the Lord's firstborn, Ex.4:22.

The feasts are at the forefront of most New Testament records, but tradition weakens their import by disconnection. Many "gospel" messages focus solely on the blood, redemption, forgiveness of sins, identification, reconciliation, and other deliverance doctrines but fail to place them in Israel's national deliverance before making applications. Consequently, the Promised Land is spiritualized to mean heaven and reading the N.T. becomes an exercise in total replacement theology. Israel's salvation, assured by the promises given her, is overlooked and the church is read into nearly every passage.

Here are the Feasts in the Gospels and Acts.

Passover. Christ's suffering, death and burial.

Unleavened Bread & First Fruits. Israel's freedom from Gentile dominion promised in the New Covenant which was ratified by the blood of the Lamb. Christ resurrection, the First Fruit of Lev.23:9-14.

Trumpets, the next Feast on the fulfillment calendar and when Peter confirmed that if Israel turned to the Lord, He would send Christ back, he was alluding to the prophets who invited Israel to turn back [convert] to God and he would convert [turn back] to them, Zech.1.

Acts confirms this Festive Calendar salvation for Israel both directly and indirectly as we see here. The promise of the Father arrived on the Feast of Weeks.

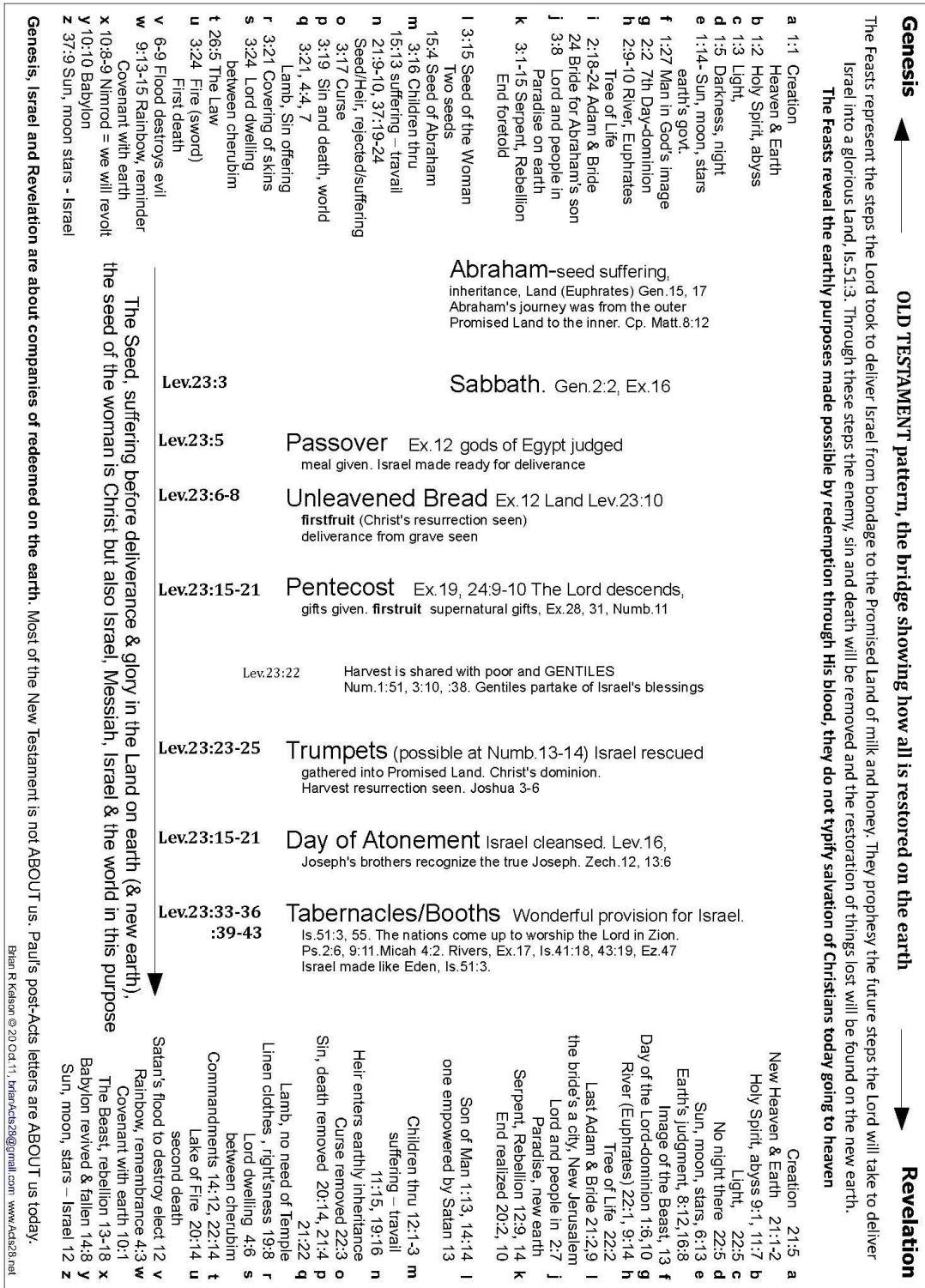
To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them,

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. Act 1:3-4.

And in the fulfilling of the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly a sound came out of the heaven as borne along by the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. Act 2:1-2. MKJV

The Lord rose from among the dead on the feast of firstfruits being the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, namely the 16th day. Israel was to count 49 days, that is 7 weeks, and on the following day, celebrate the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. The Lord spoke to his disciples on 40 of those 50 days. The Feasts are front and center of the dispensational stage at the time of Acts. The Feasts do not anticipate in any way shape or form, the program for the church which is his body and the above heavenly hope we hold today.

When we put the church which is his body in the Gospels and Acts, we force it back into the prophetic Exodus and the salvation of Israel. The Feasts are the bridge between Paradise lost and Paradise restored. Here is a chart linking Genesis to Revelation via the Feasts of Israel.



Is it any wonder with all the Old Testament understood, with 40 days instruction, and with the Feasts being fulfilled that they only had one question?

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.

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