

Biblical Notes — Acts 1:6-7

6-7 – So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" [7] He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; (6. Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἡρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ; 7. εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ)

"The Book of Acts also shows the expectation of a literal kingdom for Israel: "So when they had come together, they asked Him, 'Lord, at this time are You restoring the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority'" (Acts 1:6-7). This exchange between the risen Christ and His disciples is especially noteworthy as Jesus had spent the previous forty days teaching them specifically about the kingdom (v. 3). If ever He sought the opportunity to disclose that the church would replace Israel in any way, this would be the prime moment. Yet, remarkably, Jesus offered no such hint at the possibility. The fact that the disciples asked Jesus about restoring the kingdom to Israel flows naturally given the context that He had spent the previous forty days "speaking of things concerning the kingdom of God" (v. 3). A normal interpretation of this language leads one to infer the disciples asked this question because they believed the same promises of a future restoration of Israel as was commonly taught by both the Hebrew prophets and Jesus Himself. While some confusion was still present in the disciples, Jesus did not rebuke any of them at this point. Instead, He affirmed that the restoration of geo-political, national Israel was in God's timetable—an event still awaiting the future (v. 6). The disciples anticipated it, though the church, as recorded in Acts 2, was about to begin. The point here is, rather than denying a future to national Israel, Jesus continually acknowledged it throughout His earthly ministry and afterward."

— Brian Moulton and Cory M. Marsh, *How Dispensation Thought Corrects Luther's View of Israel*, in *Forged From Reformation*, 185.

"The earliest Christians were keenly aware that Jesus's life, death, and resurrection did not lead to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel and their expected utopian future (Acts 1:6). A future return of Jesus was needed to lead to the final and full fulfilment of God's promises, kingdom, and new creation."

— Alexander E. Stewart, *The Temporary Messianic Kingdom in Second Temple Judaism and the Delay of the Parousia: Psalm 110:1 and the Development of Early Christian Inaugurated Eschatology*, *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 59, no. 2.

"There are two telling aspects regarding this text in Acts. First, the events described occur after Jesus was crucified, died, and rose again. Since supersessionists believe that God's consummative intentions have already been fulfilled in history and in totality through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the establishment of the Church, any expectation for future restoration of the kingdom of Israel qua Israel, must be nullified. It is the kingdom of God that is granted to the Church upon the finished work of Jesus Christ and the call of the Apostles. Yet it would be a logical fallacy to think that the 'the restoration of the kingdom of Israel' took place immediately upon the establishment of the Church at Pentecost, at the beginning of Acts 2. There is nothing in the text of Acts 1 to suggest such an interpretation. Second, Jesus, in Acts 1 says nothing to correct an erroneous understanding of the earthly restoration of Israel. To the contrary, Jesus claims that the Father, through divine authority, has set a time for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but that the witnessing nature of the Church is a mediative reality that must take place prior to Israel's restoration and the consummation of salvation history."

— Steven D. Aguzzi, *Israel, the Church, and Millenarianism: A Way beyond Replacement Theology*, (2018), 47.

"He did not deny that either their expectation of the appearance on earth of his glorious kingdom in its reality, or their hope of the glorious future which that kingdom opened to the people of Israel, was well founded; he simply subdued their eager curiosity respecting the time, and directed their attention to the practical duties which they were to perform at the present period."

— Gotthard Victor Lechler, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, New Testament*, vol. 4 (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 13.

"This is the real answer to the disciples' question about the restoration of the kingdom. Jesus will return at an unknown date in the future, which will be the time for Israel's restoration."

— Wainwright, *Luke and the Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel*, 76.