

More On the Commencement

Acts 1:1-11

Introduction:

1. In the previous lesson we addressed the Great Commission as recorded in Matt. 28:19-20 as the commencement of something great.
2. The Messianic King is about to take His seat at the right hand of God. He has already ascended from the earth and received power and authority from the Father (Cf. Dan. 7:13-14).
3. He has returned briefly to the earth to appear to the disciples and speak to them concerning the kingdom of God.
4. In much the same way as we anticipate the policies and plans of a new president the disciples were anticipating what was going to happen next now that Jesus had come into His position. What will happen next as the reign of the new King commences?
5. In this lesson I want to connect the historical record of the Gospels with that in Acts so that we can see the on-going unfolding of the Kingdom of God in the world.
6. Reading of Acts 1:1-11.

Discussion:

- I. The historical record presented in Acts is a continuation of what Jesus began to do and teach (1:1).
 - A. The previous record, recorded by Luke, is the beginning (Lk. 1:1-4). Matthew's record, that we have just studied in our adult class, is a parallel record.
 - B. The period covered begins with the birth of John and the birth of Jesus and extends to various resurrection appearances (Lk. 1; 24) and the ascension (24:50-53).
 - C. Note that over the forty days Jesus spoke concerning "the kingdom of God."
 1. It is evident in Matthew, Luke, and Acts that "the kingdom of God" is the prominent theme. I would encourage you as you read through the Book of Acts to note this emphasis.
 2. It is interesting that Luke's assessment of what Jesus spoke about over the forty days was "the kingdom of God."
 - a. What was it like to be dead?
 - b. Tell us what you did after you died on the cross?
 - c. Where did you go?
 - d. All such are put aside and Jesus spoke to them about "the kingdom of God."
 - D. He told them (Specifically the 11, but I am sure others waited too.) to wait in Jerusalem. Where was He when He told them this? Perhaps Galilee (cf. Matt. 28:16) or does 1:12 mean that this took place on Mt. Olivet?
 - E. It is interesting how Luke has introduced the role of the Holy Spirit in the record.
 1. Jesus "by the Holy Spirit" had given orders to the apostles.
 - 2 "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
- II. The disciples questioned Jesus, "Is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

- A. It is not specified what Jesus spoke to them about the Kingdom during the forty days. To us their question seems unclear. Are they thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom? Their question seems not so focused on the nature of the kingdom as the time. It is unclear whether they perceive the restoring of the kingdom to take place over a long period of time or a short period of time. Jesus refers to “times and epochs.”
- B. It is obvious from their question that they perceive that He is in the authoritative position of “restoring the kingdom.”
- C. Jesus’ response suggests that they need not worry about this. The Father has control of the time. He is the authority on that.
- D. Jesus tells them they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them.
- E. “You will be My witnesses.”
 - 1. In Jerusalem.
 - 2. In all Judea.
 - 3. And Samaria.
 - 4. Even to the remotest part of the earth.
- F. This surely must imply a gradual “restoring of the kingdom” over time.

III. After this Jesus ascended into the sky (9-11).

- A. An amazing event.
- B. Enlarged upon by what the two men said in white clothing standing beside them.
- C. These men indicate a return by Jesus, but not immediately.
 - 1. The parables of the virgins and the talents suggest the same (Matt. 25).
 - 2. Cf. also the parable of the marriage feast (Matt. 22:1ff). These wedding images tie in with Jewish wedding traditions of the groom going away and returning later.

IV. In the interval as they are waiting for the power they find a replacement for Judas (12-26).

- A. Why did Jesus not make this selection while He was with them for 40 days? It is obvious that they are up for the task.
- B. It is interesting that they interpret Scripture to the effect that they should do this. See 1:20.
- C. It is obvious that they have a perception about what their work is going to be. This may give us insight into their current perception about restoring the kingdom to Israel. It involves being witnesses to His resurrection, as well as experience with them over the life span of Jesus.

V. Their power comes on the day of Pentecost and initiates the execution of the great commission (Matt. 29:19-20).

- A. Peter’s explanation of the events is set in a prophecy by Joel (17-21).
- B. Jesus the Nazarene is the focal point (22-36).
 - 1. Attestation by God.
 - 2. You nailed to a cross.
 - 3. But God raised Him.
 - 4. David knew that God had sworn to seat one of his descendants on his throne. He

looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ.

5. Now exalted to the right hand of God. He is responsible for today's events.
6. Jesus is now the new king.
- C. This must make a difference in the lives of those who have crucified Him.
 1. They react to Peter's message with emotion.
 2. His response indicates that there is something that they can do.
 3. The effect of his statement is that they can enter the kingdom by submitting to the authority of the King. Ironically, it is this submission that actually secures their forgiveness for what they have done.
 4. The King forgives.
- D. They are initiated into the kingdom through their repentance and baptism as per the great commission.
- E. They went on from there continually devoting themselves to the apostle's teaching.
- F. The new King had transformed their lives as evidenced in 43-47.

Conclusion:

1. It is from this early beginning that the kingdom of God spread.
2. We are participants in the on-going spread of the rulership of Christ over men.
3. It is a "restoration" of sorts springing from the rejection of God's rulership begun in Gen. 3; cf. Gen.1:26-27, and reiterated by Israel's rejection of God and appeal for a king in 1 Sam. 8:7.
4. As citizens of God's kingdom our mission is to bring His rule into the hearts of men from all nations.
5. Our mission commenced with the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God.