

Acts 1:6

From the Preacher's Desk:

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples asked Him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Without doubt, those simple Galileans knew how to pack a lot into one little sentence. Notice some of the significant points.

First, they called Him "Lord." Certainly this was not the first nor the last time Jesus was called such, but it is a marvelous acknowledgement of His authority and power. A lord is someone who is in charge, and Jesus had demonstrated to them that He was in control. Only a few days before, these same disciples had witnessed His death, not realizing this was part of God's plan. At this very point in time, they were witnesses of His resurrection. In control? He most certainly was. A lord is also a provider. In His reply to this question, Jesus gave them reassurance of the Father's promise of provision.

Second, they inquired of a restoration. The Jews were familiar with this concept, having been restored from Babylonian captivity. The prophets of old had not only prophesied of a carrying away, they had prophesied of a return. It is truly amazing that not one of those prophecies failed to come to pass. Skeptics today can only deny, they cannot disprove the loving care of God! The restoration of which the disciples spoke, however, was not to be. An early empire stretching from the mountains of Damascus to the River of Egypt had once been, but was to be no more. Instead of the Jews being freed from the sword of Rome, all men would be released from the shackles of sin.

Third, the disciples mention the kingdom. Without doubt, visions of Christ sitting upon David's throne in Jerusalem danced within their heads. They were half right. Yes, Christ was sitting upon David's throne, but not in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kings 2:12; 1 Chronicles 29:23; Psalm 11:4; Acts 2:30). The kingdom would be established, but not in Palestine. Instead, an heavenly kingdom with an heavenly king reigning would come to pass.

Fourth, the disciples specified Israel as the recipients of this restored kingdom. Few nations can survive without a sense of national pride, and the Jews excelled in this area. The problems of such should be self-evident. An heavenly kingdom with an heavenly king could hardly exist with an earthly constituency. Yes, Israel was a part of this kingdom, as evidenced by the fact that Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached first to them (cf. Acts 1:8). But the boundaries of this kingdom would encompass all earthly kingdoms, and its populace would include those of every race, language, and nationality. Physical Israel was no longer important. Spiritual Israel flourished (Galatians 6:16).

In one misguided question the disciples laid the groundwork for the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. It makes one wonder if at some time later they looked back on that time in amazement at how far the kingdom of God had come.