

THE COMING KINGDOM



What Is the Kingdom and
How Is Kingdom Now Theology
Changing the Focus of the Church?

Andrew M. Woods

Foreword by Thomas Ice

The Coming Kingdom

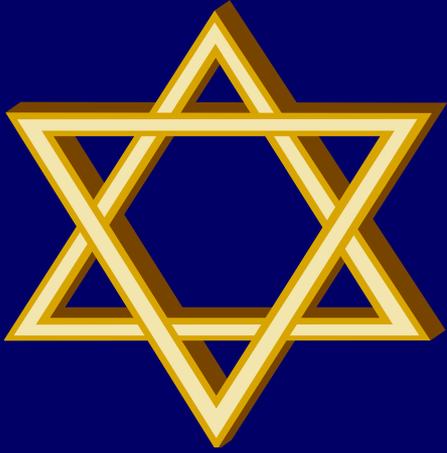
Chapter 18



Dr. Andy Woods

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Kingdom Study Outline



1. What does the Bible Say About the Kingdom?
2. The Main Problem with Kingdom Now NT interpretations
3. Why do some believe that we are in the kingdom now?
4. Why does it matter?



Response to Kingdom Now Problem Passages

1. Passages from Christ's ministry
2. **Passages from Acts**
3. Passages from Paul
4. Passages from the General letters
5. Passages from Revelation
6. Miscellaneous Arguments



Acts 2



- I. 2:1-4 – The falling of the Holy Spirit
- II. 2:5-8 – The manifestation of the gift of tongues
- III. 2:9-12 – Those present from the known world
- IV. 2:13-15 – Too early for drinking
- V. 2:16-21 – Manifestations taught in the OT (Joel 2)
- VI. 2:22-35 – Christ as the source of the manifestations
 - ◆ 2:22 Miracle worker
 - ◆ 2:23 Rejected by Israel
 - ◆ 2:24-29 Resurrected (Ps 16:8-11)
 - ◆ 2:30-32 Davidic descendant (Ps 132:11)
 - ◆ 2:33-35 At God's right hand (Ps 110:1)

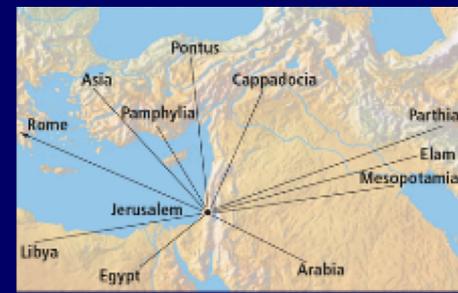
Acts 2

VII. 2:36 – Conclusion

VIII. 2:37 – Conviction

IX. 2:38-41 – Exhortation

X. 2:42-47 – The first church meeting





Darrell Bock

Darrell Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 49–50.

“Having mentioned the need to call on the Lord, Peter turns to recent events. He recounts Jesus’ ministry in death but notes the death is not able to hold him (vv. 22–24). Peter goes on to note that such impotency for death was predicted in Psalm 16, the second Old Testament citation in Acts 2 (vv. 25–28). The text is clearly presented as having been fulfilled in Jesus’ resurrection. The psalm 16 citation leads to the mention of David and a defense of the fact that a resurrection understanding of the text cannot refer to David, since he is buried (v. 29).”



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“The crucial linking allusion appears at this point. Peter notes that David was a prophet. Not only was David a prophet, he was the conscience beneficiary of an oath God had made to him that “one of the fruit of his [David’s] loins” (KJV) would sit on his throne (Acts 2:30). The term *kathisai* (to sit), which is reintroduced in the citation of Psalm 110 (note *kathou*, “sit,” in v. 34). The allusion in verse 30 is to Psalm 132:11, a Psalm which is strongly Israelitish and national in tone (see vv. 12–18). The Psalm in turn is a reflection of the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7, especially verse 12. This 2 Samuel passage is better known as the Davidic covenant. What is crucial is that David’s awareness of this covenant promise is immediately linked to his understanding of the resurrection in Psalm 16, which in turn is immediately tied to the resurrection proof text of Psalm 110 (vv. 31–35).”



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“Being seated on David’s throne is linked to being seated at God’s right hand. In other words, Jesus’ resurrection-ascension to God’s right hand is put forward by Peter as a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, just as the allusion to Joel fulfills the new covenant. To say that Peter is only interested to argue that the Messiah must be raised misses the point of the connection in these verses and ignores entirely the allusion to Psalm 132 in the Davidic covenant. This passage and Luke 1:68–79 also counter the claim that no New Testament text asserts the present work of Jesus’ as a reigning Davidite sitting on David’s Throne. The throne on which Jesus is said to sit is the one promised to David’s descendent through the Davidic promise of 2 Samuel, which was initially passed on through Solomon. Jesus sits here as David’s promised Son on David’s promised Throne. This fits Old Testament imagery as well. The idea of sitting describes the idea of rule, as the parallelism of Jeremiah 22:30 shows. As the Davidic heir, Jesus sits in and rules from heaven.”

Is Jesus Now Reigning from David's Throne?

(Acts 2)

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2. Acts 2:30 & 34 employ different verbs
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4. Failure to factor in Peter's Jewish audience
5. Linking is not the same thing as equating
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Luke 1:32-33

“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”





Alva J. McClain

Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God as Set Forth in the Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 282.

“The ‘throne of David’ here is not God’s throne in heaven, nor is the ‘house of Jacob’ a reference to the Christian church. As Godet rightly observed: ‘These expressions in the mouth of the angel keep their natural and literal sense. It is, indeed, the theocratic royalty and the Israelitish people, neither more nor less, that are in question here; Mary could have understood these expressions in no other way.’”

Luke 1:54-55

“He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever.”





Zane Hodges

Zane C. Hodges, "A Dispensational Understanding of Acts 2," in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, ed. John R. Master Wesley R. Willis, Charles C. Ryrie (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 173–74.

“All should acknowledge that the throne of David is inseparably wed to Israel’s kingdom, which we have been discussing. From the very beginning of his two-volume work, Luke makes this concept plain. Thus, when the angel Gabriel made his thrilling declaration to Mary, he states of Jesus, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:30-33). This is the only explicit reference to David’s throne in Luke or Acts until we reach Acts 2:30. Together, the two texts constitute Luke’s only direct mention of a “throne” associated with King David.”



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“One should specifically note here that in recording what Gabriel said Luke cites words that completely ignore any suggestion of universality of dominion of that throne. Gabriel does not say that Jesus will rule all mankind from David’s throne but simply “the house of Jacob.” Luke does not make the slightest intimation that by sitting on this throne Mary’s son will gain universal dominion. Of course, he will have such dominion from David’s throne, as various Old Testament passages make clear. But obviously this fact is not part of Luke’s theme here. Gabriel’s announcement focuses very narrowly on the Jewish nature of David’s throne. Nor is such an emphasis accidental in this context. Mary’s Magnificat relates God’s mercy to her with His mercy to Israel (Luke 1:46–55; see esp. vv. 54–55). Similarly, Zacharias’ Benedictus is totally focused on what God is doing for Israel through the advent of His Son (vv. 67–79).”



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“Accordingly, when we read Luke 1 we are inhaling the very atmosphere of Old Testament Jewish expectation. We hear from the lips of Mary and Zacharias those grand hopes for national deliverance that were so inextricably bound up with the expectation of the divine king who would rule “Jacob” from David’s throne. This is what we have here—and nothing more. Despite this fact, progressive dispensationalists assert that the Lord Jesus even now is reigning from David’s throne, although national Israel has experienced none of the deliverance of which Mary and Zacharias spoke so glowingly in this context. **Were it not for the fact that serious men have proposed this view, it might well be dismissed out of hand.** According to the understanding of the Old Testament saints, who Mary and Zacharias represent so effectively, the throne of David could mean only one thing—the earthly throne that began with the reign of David himself and was passed down to his physical descendants who sat on it.”



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“No one was entitled to sit on that throne unless he was, in fact, of Davidic lineage. Thus, Luke tells us carefully that Gabriel was sent to “a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David” (v. 27). So also Zacharias confirms that God “has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of . . . David” (v. 69). It was common Jewish belief that is expressed in the question of John 7:42: “Has not the Scripture said the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” There is not the slightest shred of evidence that the throne of David has ever been conceived as anything other than the earthly seat of authority where David reigned and where only his physical descendants could legitimately reign. The term “throne of David” simply refers to this—nothing else. . . .”



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“However, progressive dispensationalists, in spite of consistent usage of the Bible, are not deterred from declaring that, even today, Christ is reigning from the throne of David. But this means that they must apply the term throne of David to what is actually the throne of God! And they feel the freedom to do this even in the absence of a single text that explicitly makes this identification. The result is a view that would have shocked any biblically literate Old Testament Jew—and should shock New Testament exegetes today.”

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Acts 2:30

“And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE.”



Acts 2:34-35

“For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.’”



Is Jesus Now Reigning from David's Throne?

(Acts 2)

Verse:	Acts 2:30	Acts 2:34
Psalm	132:11	110:1
Verb:	<i>Kathizō</i>	<i>Kathēmai</i>
Kind of verb:	Transitive	Intransitive
Translation	To seat or place	To sit



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“But unless Bock is reading the Greek text in the form found in the Majority Text (not likely, to be sure), there appears to be a translational gaffe here that slightly overstates the similarity between verses 30 and 34. As you read the modern editions of the Greek New Testament, the verb *kathisai* in verse 30 is not to be read as intransitive (“to sit”) but as transitive (“to seat”; cf. the NIV here). In verse 34, however, the intransitive sense “to sit” is correct, even though a slightly different Greek verb is involved. But, in view of the difference in verbs, Bock is not technically accurate when he states that the former verb is “reintroduced” in the quotation from Psalm 110. Clearly this would be quibbling were it not for the fact that Bock is trying to make these verses parallel by appealing to the use of a single verb in the same sense in both verses.”

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“Technical considerations aside, the use of a verb for sitting proves nothing about whether or not the two thrones are to be identified. What else does one do on a throne? Suppose that one states, “Mr. Smith is destined to sit in the governor’s chair in Austin and currently is sitting in the chair of the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court.” Would anyone ever conclude from this that the words “sit” and “sitting” intimate that the two chairs in question are identical? Obviously not.”

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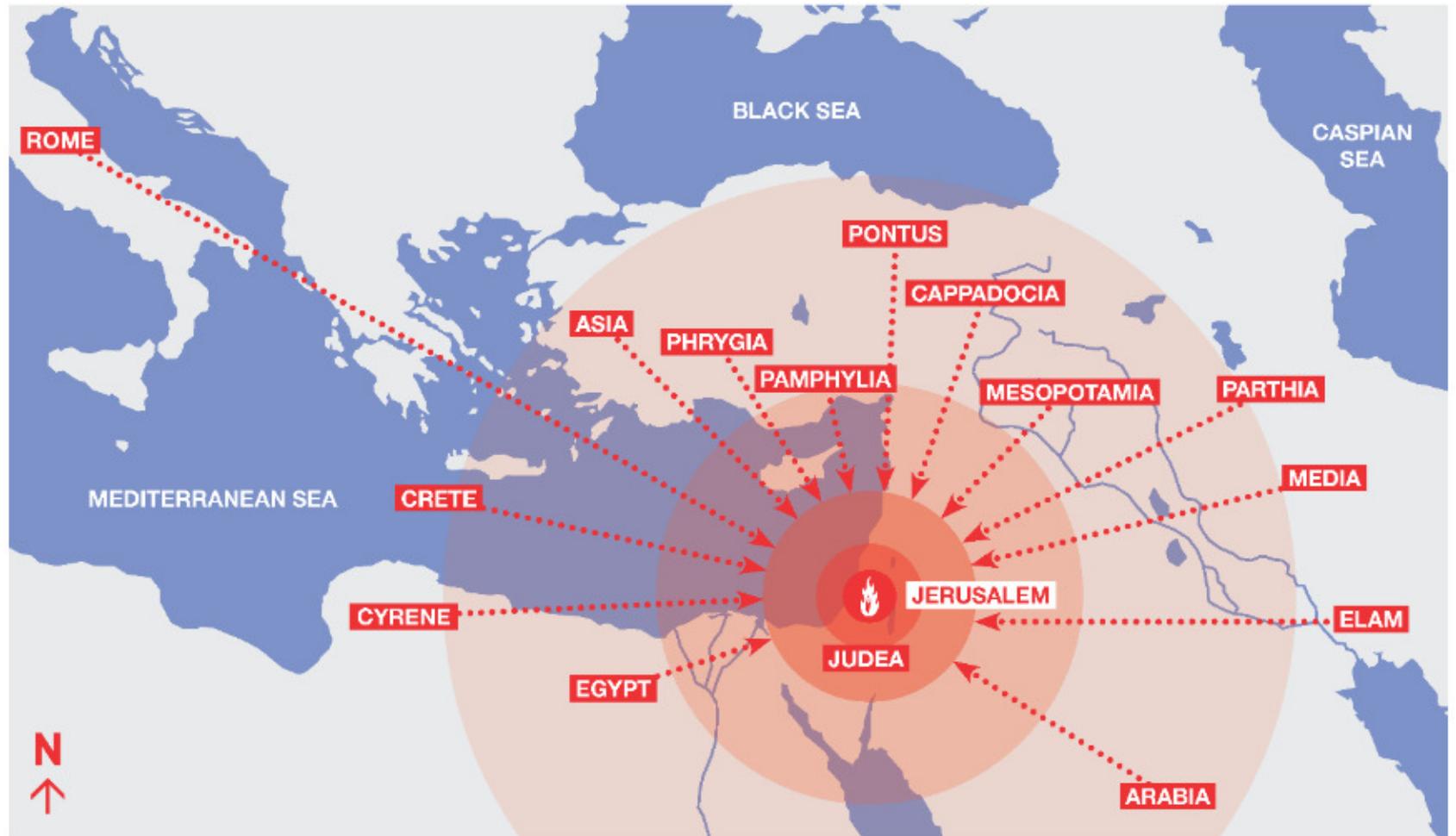


Levitical Feasts (Lev. 23)

Feast	Season	Purpose	Type
Passover	Spring	Redemption	1 Cor. 5:7
Unleavened Bread	Spring	Separation	John 6:35
1st fruits	Spring	Praise	1 Cor. 15:20
<u>Pentecost</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Praise</u>	<u>Acts 2:1-4</u>
Trumpets	Fall	New Year	Matt. 24:31
Atonement	Fall	Lev 16	Zech. 12:10
Booths	Fall	Wilderness provision	Zech. 14:16-18

THE NATIONS OF PENTECOST ACTS 2:9-11

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“It is perfectly safe to say that no one in Peter’s day could have been expected to glean from his words that somehow the throne of David and God’s extraterrestrial throne were to be identified. **For that idea to be clear, it would have to be stated directly. But Peter does not do that here, nor does any writer anywhere else in the New Testament.** What is truly relevant is Bock’s observation that the quotation found in verse 30 comes from a Psalm (132) “which is strongly Israeliteish in tone.” This, of course, is precisely what we saw in connection with Luke’s first reference to the throne of David in Luke 1:28–33. The true character of the Davidic throne is that it is indeed Israeliteish in tone, and hence “earthly.” Nothing indicates that such characteristics can be applied to the celestial throne of God.”

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“And even if it is, “linking” is not equivalent to “identification.” Bock’s argument contains a logical fallacy. Bock has rested much on the idea of “linking” without acknowledging that two things can be linked without any necessity that they be equated. Certainly there are various senses which the throne of David can be linked with God’s celestial one. After all (as Paul teaches us in Romans 13) all earthly power proceeds from God in heaven. If anyone is entitled to occupy David’s throne in a future day, it would certainly be David’s descendant who now occupies the right hand of the throne of God.”



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“Indeed, the writer of Hebrews presents our Lord as seated “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3) where He is “waiting till his enemies are made his footstool” (Heb. 10:12–13). It is most certainly not while He is on the heavenly throne that He achieves the victories associated with the Davidic throne in Luke 1 (see earlier discussion). On the heavenly throne He simply waits for that. But His presence on God’s throne is a guarantee that someday He also will sit on David’s throne as Victor over all of Israel’s enemies. This is the true link between the heavenly and earthly sessions of Christ. **But the idea that the two thrones can in any sense to be equated is illusory. It is not supported by any hard data at all.**”

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Acts 2:33

“Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”





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“Yet even apart from this consideration, Bock misses the point of the quotation from Psalm 110 in Acts 2. As verse 33 makes clear, the real link is with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is a well-confirmed New Testament teaching that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the *direct consequence* of our Lord’s ascension to the Father. According to John’s Gospel, the Lord informed the disciples, “it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you” (16:7). Earlier He had also said, “and I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may abide with you forever” (14:16).”



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“Our Lord’s return to the Father and His intercession there are necessary to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in Luke-Acts the gift of the Spirit is termed “the promise of the Father” for which the disciples must wait until after Jesus’ ascension to Heaven (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). Bock labels Psalm 110 a “resurrection proof text.” However, it is not an explicit statement of the resurrection since the resurrection is not mentioned in the Psalm. It does prophesy enthronement at God’s right hand. The point of Peter quoting Psalm 110 is simply this: the seated Christ is the source of the Spirit’s outpouring. By His intercession He has secured what God the Father promised. This is precisely what Acts 2:33 states: “therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you see and hear.”

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"This precise point—the ascension—is in view in Acts 2:34: "For David did not send into heavens, but he says himself . . ." It is simply incorrect to treat Psalm 16 as linked with Psalm 110 by asserting that both are resurrection proof texts. Psalm 16 is, but Psalm 110 is not. **Rather, Peter quoted each Psalm with its own quite distinct emphasis in support of two different elements in his presentation.**"

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“The kingdom was not restored, and it is quite wrong to identify the throne of David with God’s extraterrestrial throne. . . . A contemporary movement within dispensationalism that calls itself “progressive dispensationalism” has taken a novel tact in regard to Israel’s kingdom. Their analysis, however, remains inchoate, their efforts to elucidate notwithstanding. . . . We conclude, then, that Bock’s linkage between the two quotations breaks down under scrutiny.”



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“And his next statement is an enormous leap into thin air: “In other words, Jesus’ resurrection-ascension to God’s right hand is put forward by Peter as a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, just as the allusion to Joel fulfills the new covenant.” The argumentation that has led up to this conclusion proves (as we have seen) absolutely nothing that even impinges on the identification Bock wishes to make. . . . Acts 2 will remain a focal point in dispensational discussion, as well it should. But classic dispensationalism can treat this text straightforwardly and with a minimum of complexity. Progressive dispensationalism, on the other hand, is forced to rely on intricate, subtle, and ultimately invalid arguments.”

CONCLUSION

Response to Kingdom Now Problem Passages

1. Passages from Christ's ministry
2. Passages from Acts
3. Passages from Paul
4. Passages from the General letters
5. Passages from Revelation
6. Miscellaneous Arguments

