After Christ’s resurrection, “He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, being seen of “the Apostles forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Jesus Himself, at the very beginning of those forty days, had opened the Apostles’ understanding, enabling them to “understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). On the day of Christ’s ascension, at the conclusion of the forty days, the Apostles, having understood the Scriptures through divine assistance, and having received Christ’s particular instruction concerning the things of His kingdom during the forty days, yet felt that they lacked one essential piece of information: the time. Therefore they ask this question: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?” (Acts 1:6). To this the Lord replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own authority” (vs.7). The question was not, ‘Wilt thou restore again the kingdom to Israel?’ for, to the Apostles, that was not subject to question. The question simply regarded the time when this was to take place.

The words “restore again” in the Apostle’s question are a translation of the original Greek word αποκαθιστῆμι (pronounced apokathistemi) which means to restore with the idea of to give back, to put back, or to reclaim (what is lacking or owing) back to its former or proper place (cf. Moulton and Milligan, Bauer, Thayer, et. al.). Reclaiming or restoring a kingdom ordinarily (if not necessarily) entails three things: 1. the placing of the entitled royal heir and qualified living successor on the throne of that kingdom; 2. the submission of all loyal subjects to that heir; and 3. the restoration of the stated lands and territories of that enthroned sovereign. The Apostles, when they ask the question, obviously had this idea of restoration in mind with universal implications.

Amillennarians teach that in spite of the fact that the Lord had given the Apostles’ the ability to understand the Scriptures, and in spite of the fact that He had added to their new understanding His own instruction concerning the kingdom, nevertheless, at the conclusion of those forty days none of the Apostles yet understand the Scriptures concerning the kingdom. For, according to amillennarians, if the Apostles had understood the Scriptures, they would not have asked such an ill-founded question concerning a future event that was never to take place.

This is because amillennarians insist that Christ, either by His very presence with His disciples or by His act of rising from the dead, had already restored the kingdom to Israel. They maintain that the kingdom was and thus is immediately present in this present era. They also maintain that because it is a spiritual kingdom it is only perceptible by those who have been regenerated and spiritually enlightened. (Albeit, if this were the case, it seems peculiar that the presence of Israel’s restored kingdom was not perceived by Christ’s regenerated and enlightened disciples.) Nevertheless, according to amillennarians, the Apostles really should have known from the Scriptures that the kingdom had already been restored to Israel spiritually and actually, i.e. to the extent that it was intended to be restored to Israel.
Of course, if this were true, it would mean that this event, the future restoration of the kingdom to Israel to which the Apostles specifically referred in their question, was never going to happen. But Jesus certainly did not tell them that it was not. The Lord definitely left them to conclude that it was going to happen at a designated time in the future. Albeit, the time was not to be revealed to them. Now, if it were true that Jesus deliberately left his Apostles with a false impression after such a question, this would mean that Jesus violated the ninth commandment (cf. Larger & Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Standards).

**A Matter of Context**

What had Christ been saying about the time of the coming of His kingdom, and in what context had He been speaking concerning the appearance of the kingdom? Not more than ten days prior to His death, Christ departed from Jericho and made His final ascent to Jerusalem. It was at that time that Jesus told the parable of the pounds, “because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear” (Luke 19:11). “He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return” (vs.12). In Christ’s parable, the kingdom does not appear and those servants who are the faithful stewards of their master’s deposits do not receive authority over their jurisdictions until after the master’s returns. When the nobleman does return in the full manifestation of his title and kingdom, then the power of judgment is given also to His servants, even to slay their master’s enemies. It is after all these things that the faithful servants then continue to rule over the cities of their master’s realm.

The principle is that the future appearance of the kingdom (visible even to enemies) is certain, but that the kingdom’s appearance was not to accompany those things (passion, crucifixion, resurrection, and pentecost) which were about to transpire when the Lord came up to Jerusalem. Rather, the parable’s portrayal of a long journey and a long awaited return of the heir to the throne depict a considerable lapse of time, enough to bring long investments to fruition before the kingdom appeared. Nevertheless, amillennarians maintain that the kingdom did appear in conjunction with those events that transpired immediately subsequent to Christ’s final ascent to Jerusalem.

During this same time period, Christ sets forth specific teaching on the resurrection of the just. The resurrection of Abraham and Isaac, together with Jacob, in a restored land and inheritance, is an essential theme of Christ’s Gospel of the Kingdom. Two days before His death, the Sadducees confronted Christ to test Him claiming Moses for their authority as they tried to demonstrate that Christ’s doctrine of the resurrection was absurd. Christ answered them from Moses and declared: “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who shall be counted worthy to attain that age, and (or even) the resurrection which is out from among the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage...” (Luke 20:34-35). The form of the original language employed here is neither pliable nor imprecise: just as Christ’s own resurrection was \( \varepsilon \ \kappa \nu \varepsilon \kappa \rho \omega \nu \) (\( \varepsilon \ k \nu \varepsilon \kappa \rho \omega \nu \)) out from among the dead, so those who shall be accounted worthy to attain that age shall experience the resurrection \( \tau \hat{\eta} \xi \varepsilon \ \kappa \nu \varepsilon \kappa \rho \omega \nu \) (\( \tau \hat{\eta} \xi \ k \nu \varepsilon \kappa \rho \omega \nu \)), which is out from among the dead. The only way that there can be such a resurrection out from among the dead is if certain ones are still dead while others are raised to life out from among those still dead.
(cf. Phil. 3:11). Christ immediately referred to Moses to prove the necessity of this future resurrection of certain ones out from among the dead. If those Sadducees had indeed known Moses, they should have known the specific terms of the covenant promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; because, as Moses wrote, the Lord promised each of these three men that they personally would possess the Land, saying, “to thee will I give it...” (Genesis 13:15, 17:8, 26:3, 28:13).

The point is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all died without inheriting, without yet possessing, any of the land. They were only strangers and pilgrims in it. But they must yet inherit the land and possess it, and they must do so together with their seed (which is Christ) in the resurrection. They must become heirs and possessors of the land together with all of their covenant children of promise after the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14), which is the resurrection out from among the dead. Otherwise, God would be a covenant breaker and a liar. Dead men do not inherit and possess land. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must all rise and live in order that the covenant can be fulfilled. Thus, the covenant keeping God can only be the God of the living (Luke 20:37-38).

The very construction of words employed by our Lord in saying that the children of the resurrection are those who “shall be counted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection which is out from among the dead...” is incompatible with the amillennial assumption that there shall be but one future resurrection including both the redeemed and the damned. Furthermore, if the Lord’s reference in Moses to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to be taken out of context and not in relation to “the resurrection which is out from among the dead,” then the Lord’s words constitute no proof of resurrection at all. What the Lord answers concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would only serve to say that there is some sort of life after death without the necessity of resurrection. Such a shallow examination of the construction of the original language would reduce the Lord’s response to nonsense and would prove nothing from Moses.

Also, in this larger context, it was at the last supper when the Lord Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.” (Luke 22:17 and 18). In the course of the several meetings of our Lord with his apostles during the forty days after His resurrection, though Christ made a point of eating with his beloved disciples, He conspicuously did not drink of the fruit of the vine with them. Yet, Christ’s very utmost desire to do that very thing was clearly expressed in His words at the last supper (Luke 22:15-18). The reason why He did not do so could only because the kingdom of God had not yet come. For, if the kingdom had indeed come, in the way that amillenarians assert, Christ’s partaking of the fruit of the vine would have been an obvious and incontrovertible proof of such a realized and present kingdom. If it had happened, could the narrator have failed to include it? Luke could not have been allowed to omit such a specifically prophesied and earnestly desired and expected event from the divine narrative. But the most obvious implication of this is that, if the Lord Jesus had been partaking of the fruit of the vine with His disciples after the resurrection, the disciples could never have ask the question, “Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”.

If Luke’s narrative is properly considered, the disciples’ question about the time of the
restoration of the kingdom is perfectly consistent with Christ’s words on the night of His last supper and arrest. He had said to His apostles, “Ye are they that continued with me in my temptation. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30). It cannot be said that the apostles are going to be judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the everlasting estate when God shall “be all in all” (I Cor. 15:28), for it is obvious that there will be no judging in the perfection of the everlasting estate. And, the apostles are not at this time sitting on thrones in judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel, for the time when the saints shall judge is not yet come (I Cor. 6). Therefore, the time when the apostles will be dining at the Lord’s table with Him and when they will be judging the twelve tribes of Israel is in an era which is about to come. It is not for us to know when that time will come. But, since the Lord made this reference to His future table as He reclined with His Apostles at the table of the last supper, He clearly did refer to that time when He shall be partaking of both the supper and the fruit of vine with them.

A parallel to this reference in Luke 22:28-30 appears in Matthew 19:28: “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when (ο`/tan, at what time) the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Here the word translated regeneration is παλιγγενεσία (pronounced palingenesia), the common usage of which “denotes the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation” (Thayer). And J. H. Thayer adds the following note concerning the use of this word in Matthew 19:28: that signal and glorious change of all things (in heaven and earth) for the better, that restoration of the primal and perfect condition of things which existed before the fall of our first parents, which the Jews looked for in connection with the advent of the Messiah, and which the primitive Christians expected in connection with the visible return of Jesus from heaven.... [Lexicon, pp.474-475].

So, both the nature of the language and the preceding context of the narrative indicate that the Lord has not yet restored the kingdom unto Israel, but that He will certainly do so at an appointed time in the future. The time is not for us to know, for the Father has reserved that information under His own authority. In the mean time, the Lord’s servants will be witnesses of their coming King and His dominion.

**The Premise of the Book of the Acts**

The question “Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” together with the Lord’s response, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own authority. But ye shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:6-8), constitute the premise statement, the proposition and the purpose of the Book of the Acts. There is a great difference between telling Jews and Gentiles of a realized and present kingdom and telling them of a King Who shall come and sit on David’s throne in the future. Either to ignore or to set aside the foregoing context of the continuing divine narrative, or to ignore the implications of the precise language of Holy Scripture, as antimillennarians do, in order that they might substitute an a priori assumption for the actual proposition of the divine
book is an error which can give rise to many even more serious errors. To say that the very proposition of the Acts is merely an ignorant and unwarranted question which did not receive a straight answer form the Lord is a most dreadful way, if not unconscionable way, for anyone to begin to be Christ’s witness to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Did the apostles and the faithful witnesses with them, whose messages and statements are recorded in the Acts, preach and maintain that there shall be a future restoration of the kingdom to Israel? Did they say that this restoration is to take place after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? Peter, in his message on the day of Pentecost, demonstrated that the future restoration of the kingdom to Israel is integral to the apostles’ witness and to their preaching of Christ’s gospel of the Kingdom: he spoke candidly of David in the Book of the Acts 2:30-36:

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

What is the significance of this connection between the royal line of David and the terms Lord and Christ? The significance is just this: the resurrection of the Son of man, “the last Adam,” was in order that He should restore the dominion that the first Adam lost. To do this, God chose that out of David’s royal line His Anointed One (or His Christ) would come and re-establish that world dominion as MAN on David’s throne. God promised that His Son would become the kinsman of men by being born of a woman, in order that He might do all of the works that God required of man, defeat Satan, and reign as man, with restored dominion (Genesis 3:15).

So, Christ, the eternal Son of God, was born into the family of Man in order to be the last Adam and in order to fulfill the covenant of works under which the first man had failed and forfeited dominion. Christ is not only the promised seed and heir of Abraham, He is the Lamb that God Himself provided, Who has been seen on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22); and He is also the Redeemer (Restorer) King of that royal dynasty which was promised to Abraham and which did come out of Abraham’s loins. In addition, Christ was “made under the Law” of Moses in order that He might become the Kinsman Redeemer of Israel (of both the land of Israel and the children of Israel). Christ is the only perfectly obedient one of all the children of Israel; everyone else is cursed under the Law. Jesus is the only one qualified to inherit the land and to possess all of the blessings which were promised in the Law. Without these qualifications, He could not be the Royal Redeemer to take upon Himself all of the curse, to pay the price, to die “the just for the unjust” and to give what He alone possessed as a gift of inheritance to those whom He has chosen, who live by faith in Him. Without these qualifications, He could not redeem that which had become cursed under the Law. So it is that Jesus the Nazarene (נצרית)}
[nsr], the tender branch out of the root of David, Is. 11:1) is the only one of the house of David with the ability to be the Redeemer and to restore David’s dynastic line, which had been cut off (Jeremiah 22:30).

This Kinsman King had to defeat the power of sin and death and thus to deliver His people from bondage, so to defeat Satan and to make a show of it openly. To be the redeeming Heir to David’s throne, Christ had to rise from the dead; and, also in order to qualify, He had to ascend to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high for an appointed time. And, furthermore, it is necessary for Him yet to come again to reign and to rule with power in the midst of His enemies (as Psalm 110:2 specifies). In the mean time, many of us who had been His enemies are made to become subservient and willing subjects to Him Who is both Lord and Christ. In contrast to Lamentations 2:1, the true Israel of God, the redeemed and the faithful, are the ones who shall make up the ever abiding footstool of the Lord.

Many mistaken views among western Christians are due to a lack of understanding of the Hebrew and eastern usages of terms and practices. This matter concerning His footstool is a typical case in point: in all of the ancient East, the greatness of a king and the majesty of his dominion was seen in the fact that those who had been counted among his enemies became his conspicuous supporters and defenders. The loyal and subservient guards of David’s throne were Pelethites, Philistines [a form of the same word as Pelethites], Gentiles and foreigners who had embraced David as God anointed before David came to the throne. These able soldiers had came with David from the Philistine city of Gath (a type of Christ’s future reign, II Samuel 15:18). Taking the pattern in the same way, the trained and elite guard of the Sultans in Istanbul had been the orphans of martyred Christians, children who had been converted to Islam. This was supposed to show the glory and the boast of the Sultans as the ones favored by Allah.

Antimillennarians, in order to try to impose their system on the Scriptures, have interpolated an assumption that David’s throne must have been moved up to heaven and placed at the right hand of the Majesty on high. They have contrived this assumption so that they can assert that Christ has already been seated on David’s throne for the past two millennia, a time period which they call the millennium and the spiritual kingdom. But their assumption fails not only because it is not found in Scripture and because it is contrary to the nature of the case, but because it ignores the language by categorically denying the apodosis, for the necessary condition to be fulfilled before Christ reigns on David’s throne is not ye fulfilled, vis. Christ is still waiting and “expecting till his enemies be made His footstool” (Hebrews 10:13). After that, He will come. And, after His coming, He will be reigning with those saints who will have kept his works unto the end. Both He and they will then be shepherding the nations with an iron rod (Rev. 2:27). But, as of yet, not all of those enemies who are appointed to be converted and transformed and thus to be made to comprise His footstool have yet been so transformed. The form of the language clearly demands that the throne of David’s Heir and Redeemer King is not to be occupied by Christ until the footstool of that throne is completed.

David’s throne was not transported up to heaven. The very point of God becoming man in order to redeem and restore Man’s dominion by the Man Christ Jesus sitting on David’s throne and ruling all nations with an iron scepter is thus set aside by antimillennarians. In their system the meek never actually inherit the earth.