

forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3), they asked a very natural question: "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?*" The natural interpretation of these words would be that they wanted to know whether the resurrected Lord was now going to introduce the long period of justice and peace that had been promised. Jesus answered, "*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;: and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1:7-8).

Jesus did not say that the disciples were mistaken in their expectation. He did not say that the promised kingdom would consist simply of peace in the hearts of believers in the midst of a wicked world. He did not say that their witnessing would be the means of establishing the promised time of universal peace and justice. He merely said that it was not for them to know the times or the seasons. Very soon after he made these statements he ascended into heaven and the disciples were assured that "*this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" (Acts 1:11)

There is much evidence that during the first few centuries after Christ's ascension, Christians looked with longing and expectation for the return of Christ and the universal establishment of His kingdom. It was only after the persecutions ceased and the Roman empire became nominally Christian, that some began to say that the kingdom of peace and justice had already arrived.

WHAT ABOUT REVELATION 20?

It is the writer's belief that the fact that a long period of universal peace and justice is to be introduced by Christ at the time of His return could be proved without the necessity of drawing any evidence from Revelation 20 (the chapter where the term "thousand years" is introduced), but that this chapter gives additional information and clearly shows the relation to each other of two great elements of Christian hope -- the return of the King and the establishment of the universal kingdom. Since so much argument has centered around this chapter, it is important that we examine it carefully.

There is no need here to investigate all the details of the Book