

The Kingdom

Acts 1:1–14

Each day, it's important to take your bearings. Where are you today? In the Easter season, in the scriptures, in your daily life, in your very self? Spend a few minutes getting your bearings for the day.

Starting today, and for the rest of the Easter season, we will be reading Acts of the Apostles. As we position ourselves with the apostles, let us begin with a prayer for deliverance—for ourselves, our fraternity brothers, and all Exodus Men.

You are in Jerusalem with the apostles. Jesus has commanded us to wait for the coming of his Spirit. We unite ourselves to the apostles in prayer and in witnessing to the resurrection.

Pray that the Lord grants deliverance to you, your family, and your fraternity.

Pray for freedom for all men in Exodus, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same

way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away; and when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Reflection

Like the disciples, we move from the experience of the resurrection into the life of the early community as we begin reading Acts of the Apostles. There is some repetition as Luke begins his follow-up to his Gospel, recapping Jesus’s ascension.

With the disciples gathered around, looking up at a blank sky, it might seem like Jesus abandoned them. He had just been speaking to them about the kingdom of God, and the disciples asked if the time had come for Jesus to establish the kingdom on earth.

Jesus establishes the kingdom through his ascension by promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. This kingdom is not a political unit, like any other civil entity, but something that abides within us. It is the rule of Jesus in the hearts and lives of his followers, and he governs this kingdom through the gift of his divine Spirit. Jesus could have answered his disciples’ questions by saying, “you will see what the kingdom is, when you receive the Holy Spirit.” The change in them will be remarkable, as we will see in Acts.

The angels tell the disciples, don’t just stand there looking blankly; go do what Jesus said. This will be a guiding principle for us in Easter: don’t just stand there wondering what to do next. Get praying. Wait for the promise that is coming at Pentecost, when things will become spiritually turbocharged. Get discussing with your fraternity. Build a plan that will last.

Day 4 Action Item

Continue to build a strong fraternity. Community is a pillar of the Christian life, as we will see in Acts of the Apostles. If you completed an Exodus, you know it is essential to rely on the support of your brothers. In this Easter season, keep your fraternity going strong. As we form our Plan of Life, we are called to continue weekly meetings or fraternity outings. In addition, you can get your families involved in your outings so that your fraternity can also strengthen your home life.

Now is a good time to take stock of your fraternity and make a plan to continue meeting in the Easter Season and beyond. We Exodus Men are often known for the intensity of our penance. In the Easter Season, we should be known for the exuberance of our joy in the life of the Resurrection. We are the men who feast—not just the men who fast.

Consider your fraternity--the men who said "yes" to Exodus 90 and Lent or those men who said "not now", or even those brothers who started but haven't been around for a while. Easter is the time to welcome them into your joy.

If you do not have a fraternity, head to the Fraternity Finder to create or join a remote group. Now's the time.

As part of the Easter Season, Exodus now provides a Weekly Meeting Guide feature that includes a specific agenda for each week of the Easter Season (here's the Easter Octave Agenda). This agenda should provide additional support for holding effective meeting each week.