

# Repentance to Israel

An 8-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®  
Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

## About This Series

This series examines the opening chapters of the book of Acts as a continuation of God’s prophetic program with the nation of Israel, not the beginning of the dispensation of grace. Keith Blades demonstrates through right division of scripture that God extended extraordinary mercy and forbearance to Israel following the cross, offering repentance through the Holy Spirit’s ministry before the scheduled day of wrath. The series establishes that Acts 1–7 belongs entirely to Israel’s prophesied program, and that only with the raising up of Saul of Tarsus as the apostle Paul in Acts 9 does the mystery dispensation of grace — the present age — begin.



[www.enjoythebible.org](http://www.enjoythebible.org)

## Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
<b>Lesson 1</b>	Establishing the Times Past / But Now / To Come framework for rightly dividing God’s word
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Israel’s prescription for cleansing through three baptisms and John’s prophecy
<b>Lesson 3</b>	The unpardonable sin and the Holy Ghost’s three-fold Godhead testimony to Israel
<b>Lesson 4</b>	Three parables of postponement showing God’s extension of mercy and forbearance
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Old Testament prophetic foundation: Isaiah 28, Psalm 22, and Psalm 110
<b>Lesson 6</b>	Acts 1 — the apostles’ preparation for ministry and their kingdom expectation
<b>Lesson 7</b>	Acts 1–7 overview: from Pentecost through Stephen’s witness and the division of the nation
<b>Lesson 8</b>	Stephen’s death, the threshold of wrath, and the Acts 9 transition to Paul’s apostleship

## Lesson Summaries

L1

### Foundation of Right Division *Times Past, But Now, and To Come*

- Most Christians err by applying Matthew–John and Acts 1–8 to the dispensation of grace — a portion of scripture that belongs to Israel’s program
- 2 Timothy 2:15 commands rightly dividing the word of truth, requiring recognition of three distinct time periods in God’s redemptive plan

#### THREE TIME PERIODS

- Times Past (Genesis through Acts 8) — God’s dealings with Israel under the Law and prophetic program
- But Now (Romans through Philemon) — the unprophesied dispensation of grace for the body of Christ
- To Come (Hebrews through Revelation) — the future fulfillment of Israel’s prophetic program

#### THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION

- The Law functioned as a middle wall dividing Israel (nigh to God) from Gentiles (afar off) from Exodus 19 through Acts 8
- God abolished this wall only at the commencement of the dispensation of grace, making Jew and Gentile one new man
- The mystery of the dispensation of grace was entirely unprophesied and kept secret by God until revealed to the apostle Paul
  - Ephesians 2:11–16 — Times Past contrasted with the present dispensation
  - Ephesians 3:1–7 — Paul’s unique revelation of the mystery of grace
  - Romans 11:13 — Paul magnifies his office as apostle to the Gentiles

L2

### Israel’s Prescription for Cleansing *The Three Baptisms and John’s Prophecy*

- John the Baptist prophesied Israel’s future cleansing through three baptisms: water (John’s), Holy Ghost (Messiah’s), and fire (judgment)
- Matthew 3:11–12 outlines Israel’s entire remaining program — John begins with water baptism unto repentance as the opening phase

#### ISRAEL’S CLEANSING PROGRESSION

- Ezekiel 36:25–28 provides the prophetic blueprint: water cleansing, Holy Spirit indwelling, and Israel dwelling in the land under the kingdom
- The believing remnant receives the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, completing their purification
- The unbelieving element receives baptism with fire in the day of the Lord’s wrath, burning away the chaff
- Acts 1:5 records the Lord confirming John’s prophecy — the Holy Ghost baptism will be fulfilled shortly
- Acts 2:33 records Peter confirming that Jesus shed forth the Holy Ghost, fulfilling the Messiah’s baptism as prophesied
  - Matthew 3:1–12 — John’s complete prophecy of three baptisms
  - Ezekiel 36:16–28 — Prophetic foundation for Israel’s prescription for cleansing

## L3

### **The Unpardonable Sin and Holy Ghost Ministry** *Blasphemy Against the Holy Ghost*

- God the Father was testified to Israel through the Old Testament; God the Son through the gospel accounts; God the Holy Ghost testifies in Acts 1–7
- All sin and blasphemy against the Son was forgiven at the cross through judicial blindness on Israel (Luke 23:34)
- The unpardonable sin is specifically blasphemy against the Holy Ghost's testimony to Israel following the resurrection

#### **THE THREE-FOLD GODHEAD TESTIMONY**

- Matthew 12:31–32 is Israel's context: rejecting the Father (Old Testament), rejecting the Son (Gospels), rejecting the Holy Ghost (Acts 1–7) results in no forgiveness
- The cloak for Israel's sin is stripped away after the Holy Ghost comes — they now know assuredly what they have done
- Christians today cannot commit the unpardonable sin — at conversion God forgives all trespasses through faith in Christ (Colossians 2:13)
- Peter and the twelve testify that the Holy Ghost now bears witness of Jesus' resurrection and Messiahship, holding Israel accountable
  - Matthew 12:30–37 — Warning of division and accountability by words
  - Acts 2:32–36 — Peter's Pentecost testimony of the Holy Ghost witnessing to Israel
  - Acts 5:31–32 — God gives repentance to Israel through Holy Ghost ministry

## L4

### **The Sign of Jonas and Extension of Mercy** *Three Parables of Postponement and Forbearance*

- Matthew 12:39–40 declares the sign of Jonah (resurrection) as the only sign given to the evil and adulterous generation
- Signs require time to be responded to — Acts 1–7 is specifically the time granted for Israel to respond to the resurrection sign

#### **THREE PARABLES OF GOD'S MERCY**

- Luke 13:6–9 parable of the fig tree: the dresser requests one more year of extension, digging and dunging it before it is cut down
- The fig tree represents Israel's religious establishment; the Holy Ghost ministry becomes the fertilizer during Acts 1–7
- Luke 19:11–27 parable of the nobleman: servants occupy with his business while citizens declare "we will not have this man reign over us"
- The servants' occupation (Acts 1–7) and the citizens' final rejection (Stephen's death) fulfill this parable precisely
- Luke 12:32 promises the believing remnant the kingdom — the extension preserves this possibility before the day of wrath arrives
  - Matthew 12:39–40 — The sign of Jonas prophecy
  - Luke 13:6–9 — The fig tree parable of mercy and forbearance
  - Luke 19:11–27 — The parable of the nobleman and his kingdom

## L5

### **Prophetic Foundation in Isaiah and Psalms** *Old Testament*

#### *Prophecies Fulfilled in Acts 1–7*

- All events in Acts 1–7 are prophesied in the Old Testament, confirming they belong to Israel’s program, not the unprophesied mystery dispensation
- Isaiah 28 details God’s response to Israel’s rejection and the establishment of His foundation stone and the believing remnant
- Psalm 22 prophesies the Messiah’s suffering and the division of the nation between believers and rejectors

#### **PSALM 110 FRAMEWORK**

- Psalm 110:1 establishes that Christ would sit at God’s right hand until His enemies are made His footstool
- Peter quotes Psalm 110:1 in Acts 2:34–35, showing the kingdom program remains in view and Acts 1–7 is the waiting period
- The Messiah’s ministries are prophesied: earthly ministry to Israel (Gospels), heavenly ministry through the twelve (Acts 1–7), future return in wrath
- God’s Abrahamic covenants remain in effect throughout — the extension of mercy preserves the possibility of repentance before judgment falls
  - Isaiah 28 — Prophecy of the foundation stone and remnant salvation
  - Psalm 22 — Prophecy of Messiah’s suffering and Israel’s division
  - Psalm 110:1 — Christ at God’s right hand until enemies are subdued

## L6

### **Acts 1 — The Preparation for Ministry** *Resurrection, Ascension, and the Holy Ghost Promise*

- Acts 1:1–5 shows the Lord commanding the twelve to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father — the baptism of the Holy Ghost
- The Lord spent forty days with the apostles speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God — Israel’s kingdom program continues
- Acts 1:6: the apostles asked about restoration of the kingdom to Israel, expecting the kingdom — not any mystery dispensation

#### **KINGDOM EXPECTATION ESTABLISHED**

- Acts 1:7–8: the Lord does not rebuke their kingdom expectation but withholds the times and seasons; commands them to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria
- Acts 1:9–11: the Lord ascends to the Father; angels confirm He will return in like manner as He was taken up
- The replacement of Judas through casting of lots (Acts 1:21–26) demonstrates God still directing Israel’s affairs through the twelve apostles
- The apostles’ united obedience to wait in Jerusalem reflects corporate submission to the Lord’s command as Israel’s appointed representatives
  - Acts 1:1–5 — The Lord’s forty-day instruction and the Promise of the Father
  - Acts 1:6–8 — The apostles’ question about restoration of the kingdom to Israel
  - Acts 1:21–26 — Replacement of Judas confirming God’s direction of Israel’s affairs

## L7

### **Acts 1–7 Overview and the Day of Wrath Threshold** *From*

### *Pentecost Through Stephen's Witness*

- Acts 2 — Pentecost: The baptism of the Holy Ghost fulfills John's prophecy and Ezekiel's cleansing promise to the believing remnant of Israel
- Peter declares to all Israel that God has raised Jesus and made Him both Lord and Christ; Israel is given repentance and forgiveness of sins
- Signs and wonders validate the sign of Jonas (resurrection), giving Israel unmistakable testimony during the period of extension

### **APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY AND NATIONAL DIVISION**

- Division in the nation increases: the believing remnant gathers while the opposing elements harden against the message of repentance
- Acts 3–4: Peter and John testify again — through ignorance Israel crucified Jesus, but the Holy Ghost now removes that cover
- Acts 5–6: the apostles persist in testifying despite mounting persecution; God confirms their message with signs and deliverances
- Acts 7: Stephen's sweeping historical indictment traces Israel's consistent pattern of rejecting God's messengers — the climax of the nation's resistance
  - Acts 2:32–36 — Peter's Pentecost testimony declaring Jesus as Lord and Christ
  - Acts 3:17–19 — Peter declares repentance available as ignorance is lifted
  - Acts 7:54–60 — Stephen's martyrdom as the climax of Israel's rejection

### **Stephen's Death and the Acts 9 Transition** *The End of the Extension and the Mystery Revealed*

- Stephen's vision in Acts 7:55–56 shows the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God — poised to make His enemies His footstool per Psalm 110:1
- Stephen's death by stoning is the culmination of the nation's blasphemy against the Holy Ghost — Israel's rejection is complete
- Acts 7:57–59: the people gnash their teeth and stone Stephen; Saul of Tarsus witnesses and gives his approval

### **THE GREAT TURNING POINT**

- Acts 9:1–8: the Lord Jesus Christ unexpectedly returns from heaven — not to pour out wrath, but to raise up Saul of Tarsus as a brand new apostle
- This is the unprophesied, unexpected intervention: instead of wrath, God reveals the mystery of grace and suspends Israel's program temporarily
- Paul is commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles with the doctrine of the mystery — the unprophesied dispensation of grace for the body of Christ
- Romans through Philemon contains the doctrine for believers today; Hebrews through Revelation remains the prophesied program for Israel's future fulfillment
  - Acts 7:55–60 — Stephen's vision and martyrdom marking the end of the extension
  - Acts 9:1–8 — The unexpected appearance of Christ to raise up Saul of Tarsus
  - Romans 16:25–27 — Paul's revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

L8

## Key Doctrinal Distinctions

### Times Past vs. But Now vs. To Come

God's word is divided into three time periods: Times Past encompasses Genesis through Acts 8 (God's program with Israel under Law and prophecy), But Now covers Romans through Philemon (the dispensation of grace for the church, the body of Christ), and To Come includes Hebrews through Revelation (the future fulfillment of Israel's prophetic program). Proper right division requires identifying which time period and which program any given passage of scripture addresses before applying it.

### The Middle Wall of Partition

The Law of Moses functioned as a middle wall separating Israel (nigh to God) from Gentiles (afar off) from Exodus 19 through Acts 8. This wall was not abolished at the cross, but at the commencement of the mystery dispensation of grace when God made Jew and Gentile one new man — a truth previously hidden and revealed only to the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:11–16; 3:1–7).

### The Mystery of Grace vs. Israel's Prophesied Program

The dispensation of grace is a mystery — unprophesied, unspoken about, and hidden by God since the world began until revealed to Paul. Every event in Acts 1–7 is prophesied in the Old Testament and is part of Israel's continuing program. The prophetic character of these events proves they are not the beginning of the mystery dispensation, but the final stage of Israel's prophetic program before it is temporarily suspended.

### Israel's Three Baptisms for Cleansing

Fulfilling John's prophecy in Matthew 3:11 and Ezekiel 36, Israel's national cleansing involves three distinct baptisms: water baptism administered by John (beginning the process), baptism with the Holy Ghost administered by the risen Messiah on Pentecost (completing the believing remnant's cleansing), and baptism with fire in the day of the Lord's wrath (purging away the unbelieving element). These are sequential stages in Israel's prophetically ordained program.

### God's Three-Fold Testimony to Israel

God testified to Israel through three distinct witnesses corresponding to the three persons of the Godhead: God the Father through the Old Testament prophets, God the Son through His earthly ministry in the gospels, and God the Holy Ghost through the apostles in Acts 1–7. Rejection of the Father's testimony was forgiven; rejection of the Son was forgiven at the cross due to judicial blindness. But rejection of the Holy Ghost's testimony after the resurrection — with full knowledge — constitutes the unpardonable sin within Israel's dispensational context.

## Key Scripture References

<b>2 Timothy 2:15</b>	Study to show thyself approved, rightly dividing the word of truth — the foundational command for proper Bible handling
<b>Ephesians 2:11–16</b>	Contrasts Times Past with the present dispensation; describes the abolishment of the middle wall of partition
<b>Ephesians 3:1–7</b>	Paul's unique revelation of the mystery of grace given to him; the dispensation hidden since the world began
<b>Matthew 3:11–12</b>	John's prophecy of three baptisms (water, Holy Ghost, fire) — Israel's prescription for national cleansing
<b>Ezekiel 36:25–28</b>	Old Testament prophetic foundation: water, Holy Spirit indwelling, and Israel's restoration to the land
<b>Matthew 12:31–32</b>	The unpardonable sin — blasphemy against the Holy Ghost within Israel's three-fold Godhead testimony context
<b>Psalms 110:1</b>	Christ sits at God's right hand until enemies are made His footstool — the framework for the Acts 1–7 waiting period
<b>Acts 1:5–8</b>	Jesus commands the twelve to wait for the Holy Ghost baptism; apostles ask about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel
<b>Acts 2:32–36</b>	Peter's Pentecost declaration: God has raised Jesus and made Him both Lord and Christ; the Holy Ghost bears witness
<b>Acts 5:31</b>	God exalts Jesus to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel through the Holy Ghost's ministry
<b>Luke 13:6–9</b>	Parable of the fig tree: one more year of extension and forbearance before judgment falls
<b>Luke 19:11–27</b>	Parable of the nobleman: servants occupy with his business while citizens refuse his reign — the framework for Acts 1–7

---

For further study visit [www.enjoythebible.org](http://www.enjoythebible.org)

