

Revealing the Kingdom of God
“The Kingdom: A Failed Plan”
“Premillennialism” as Presented by Norman Geisler

IMPORTANT REVIEW:

The first thing I wish to do (and I’ll do it for a few weeks now) is to reemphasize the fact that the church is the kingdom on earth and that the kingdom / church was established - brought into being - on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2.

PREMILLENNIALISM AS PRESENTED BY NORMAN GEISLER:

Remember, we are defining “premillennialism” from Geisler’s words: “Christ will physically return to earth and set up a worldwide thousand-year reign” (pg. 1413).

Fundamental mistake #1 premillennialists make is to take all prophecy *literally*.

Fundamental mistake #2 is related to this; premillennialists *ignore* the NT’s clear affirmations that OT prophecies *have been fulfilled*! For example, they want to say that Elijah still must come *before* the Messiah comes, in fulfillment of Malachi 4:5. Yet, Jesus *explicitly* says that John the baptist was “Elijah” (Matt. 11:14; 17:10-12; Mark 9:11-13) and the angel told Zacharias that his son (John) would come “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17). After the gospel accounts, where Elijah is mentioned 27 times; there are only *two* mentions of Elijah in the NT: Rom. 11:2; James 5:17. In other words, *there is no further indication in the NT that “Elijah” needs to come!!*

Fundamental mistake #2 they make is to argue that “Israel will have a unique role in the messianic kingdom, *functionally* superior to that of the Gentiles” (pg 1333; emph. Geisler’s).

Fundamental mistake #3 is to believe the *land* of Palestine is *still* a part of God’s permanent plans.

Fundamental mistake #4 which premillennialists make is to create more distinctions in the word “kingdom” than what the Bible allows.

Fundamental mistake #5 is the teaching that Jesus failed to establish His kingdom as He had promised.

FIRST, WE ARE EXAMINING THE TEXTS PREMILLENNIALISTS USE TO “PROVE” THERE IS TO BE A KINGDOM ON EARTH FOR 1,000 YEARS:

Here is where we left last time...

Matthew 26:63-64 - “there seems to be no way to consistently utilize historical-grammatical interpretation of Scripture without concluding that this will be a literal messianic kingdom.” *In what way could the high priest see Jesus reigning at the right hand of God? We’ll talk more about this text when we get to Matthew 24...*

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KINGDOM?

Jesus *failed* to establish that Messianic kingdom!!!

First, Geisler summarizes that he had said up to that point (pages 1357-1358; none of which we would disagree; in fact, we spent about two months meticulously proving that the kingdom *was established* during the days of Jesus’ contemporaries):

1) The OT foretold a literal Messiah would come to reign (113 prophecies, according to *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*).

2) Jesus said He is the fulfillment of Daniel 7.

3) Jesus’ favorite term for Himself (Son of Man) is rooted in this claim (Dan. 7).

4) Daniel 2 prophecies the Messiah’s destruction of world powers.

- 5) This future reign will never end.
- 6) The Messiah's Kingdom is given to Him by the Father.
- 7) All other earthly kingdoms will serve under the Messianic Kingdom.
- 8) Messiah will bring righteousness and justice to the earth.
- 9) The Messiah will reign with the saints.

Geisler admits that the Messianic Kingdom was not fulfilled in the OT. He admits it was not fulfilled in the time of Jesus: Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51; 7:28; 16:16. He admits the kingdom was "at hand" in Jesus' early ministry. He admits the announced kingdom "was identical to the one promised in the Old Testament" (1361). He admits "Christ's miracles confirmed the proclamation that His Messianic Kingdom was 'at hand'" (1362).

But then he says, "the Messianic was not established during Jesus' day." The verses he uses, however, are all *before the day of Pentecost*: Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 11:1-5; 14:1-12; 6:9-10; 8:11. His conclusion? "The messianic kingdom will arrive at the second coming" (1363).

Here's the "kicker:" "It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the visible, political messianic kingdom promised in the Old Testament and announced in the Gospels was not realized during the life of Jesus, but was proclaimed by Jesus and the apostles as future. What happened?..."

John 1:10-11; Matthew 21:43; Luke 21:24. "Israel rejected her Messiah, and the kingdom was taken from Israel *temporarily*" (1364; *emph.* Geisler's).

Then he gives a list of various points about Israel rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. Thus, the "mystery form of the kingdom would intervene until the second coming, when Jesus will set up the long-promised messianic form, and the central feature of this time period is the church, a mystery unknown in the OT but now revealed to the apostles" (1365). The "mystery form" is supposedly anticipated by Jesus' words in Matthew 13:11.

Geisler goes on: "Through the Messiah's rejection, God would temporarily set aside His dealings with national Israel and attempt to provoke her to jealousy by centering on the Gentiles' salvation. Israel would not be restored as a nation until the 'fulness of the Gentiles' (Rom. 11:25) was complete."

He uses Romans 9-11 to discuss the "Messiah's Rejection." We have already studied this passage. While Geisler wants to use verse 25 to show that "all Israel will be saved," that statement comes out of a prophecy of Isaiah (59:20-21) that was looking forward to the *first coming of Christ*! According to Geisler, when "all Israel will be saved", "this will be at the end of the tribulation before the beginning of the millennium" (1368).

He asks the question "Is the church extraneous to God's plan? It *is* parenthetical from the standpoint of Israel's national history, since God's time-clock for Israel stopped at Messiah's rejection; hence there is a break between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel" (1369). He's referring here to Daniel 9:24-27.

So, he bluntly states that "the messianic kingdom was not yet fulfilled in the early church." His "proof-texts"? Acts 1:6-11 (which was spoken *before the day of Pentecost*!) Acts 3:19-26 (first, where is "kingdom" in the passage? second, it was true if the Jews repented and were baptized, they would be "refreshed" - Acts 2:38!) Romans 11:26 (we've already studied this) 1 Cor. 15:23-28 (how does this text prove the messianic kingdom is *not* the church on earth?) 2 Tim. 4:1 (does this text *necessarily* prove that the "kingdom" was not yet established?) Rev. 11:15 (we'll have a whole lesson Revelation; he still insists that the kingdom

promised in the OT is not yet fulfilled and *using Amos 9:11-15* to prove his point *which Peter says was established in the church in the first century!!! Acts 15:15-18!*)

The “kingdom” passages later in the NT, which show the kingdom was in existence, is only the “spiritual reign of God,” not the Messianic kingdom:

John 18:36

Luke 17:20-21 (which was actually uttered *before* the day of Pentecost)

He also uses these passages to show that “God’s spiritual reign” is in the church:

Observe what he says: “While Christ is not King of the church in the Davidic (or messianic) sense of the political ruler situated in Jerusalem - since the messianic kingdom has not yet begun - nonetheless, He is the sovereign Head of the church and reigns over it spiritually” (1374):

Romans 14:17

1 Cor. 4:20

Col. 4:11

1 Thess. 2:12

2 Thess. 1:5

1 Tim. 1:17

1 Tim. 6:15 - On this text, Geiser writes: “...the word *King* implies He has a spiritual kingdom now.”

The NT uses the word *kingdom* several times for the church: Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; “Christians are a kingdom of priests” (1376);

Hebrews 12:28 - “it seems natural to take it in the present spiritual sense of the kingdom.”

After summarizing all the passages dealing with the Abrahamic covenant, Geisler states: “The first of Israel’s covenants (Abrahamic) is an unconditional agreement God made with Abraham and his descendants that has never been fulfilled at any time in history, either prior to or after the advent. ...it will not be fulfilled until Christ returns ([Matt] 24:30; 25:31-34).” At that point, “Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all other Old Testament saints will be raised and literally will reign over the whole earth in physical resurrected bodies” (1386).

Next time, we’ll examine “The Second Coming and the Millennium.”