

#6 - Revealing the Kingdom of God
"Premillennialism" as Presented by Norman Geisler

What have we studied so far?

We have emphasized that Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise of Daniel 7:13-14:

- 1) One "like a Son of Man" was coming; He came to the "Ancient of Days" and was presented to Him.
- 2) There in the presence of the Ancient of Days, in heaven, He received "dominion, glory, and a kingdom."
- 3) All peoples, nations, men of every language serve Him.

Three terms are important for our purposes from that text: "Son of Man," "dominion" (authority), and "Kingdom." We have shown that Jesus considered Himself *that* "Son of Man." Jesus also *taught* with authority. He *forgave sins* with authority. He commanded *diseases*, and *wind and waves*, and *demons* with authority. In Matthew 28:18-20, *after the resurrection*, Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

The *third* term from Daniel 7 which is important for us to consider, which is the key to this whole series of Bible classes, is the word "kingdom." Last week we ended by studying the word "king" in the NT. Jesus was acknowledged as a (future) king from His very birth through His trial, and all the way to the end of the NT. First, as we have done before, we examine the use of "Kingdom" in the Gospel of Matthew...

NOW WHAT ABOUT THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN / GOD"?

"Kingdom" in Matthew: 56 times
"Kingdom of God": 4 times
"Kingdom of *heaven*": 32 times
"Kingdom" alone: 20 times

"Kingdom" in Mark:
"Kingdom of heaven" - 0
"Kingdom of God" - 14 times
"Kingdom" - 20 times

"Kingdom" in Luke:
"Kingdom" - 46 times
"Kingdom of heaven" - 0 times
"Kingdom of God" - 32 times

"Kingdom" in John:
Only 5 times:

HERE IS WHERE WE LEFT OFF LAST WEEK:

"Kingdom" in Acts:
Only 8 times:
1:3, 6 - Before His ascension, Jesus spent 40 days talking to His disciples about the coming Kingdom; the apostles asked when the kingdom would be restored...
8:12 - early Christians preached the existence of the kingdom
14:22 - persecutions come to those who desire to enter the kingdom
19:8 - Paul preached the existence of the kingdom

20:25 - Paul preached the existence of the kingdom
28:23, 31 - Paul preached the existence of the kingdom

“Kingdom” in the rest of the NT:

Rom. 14:17 - the kingdom is not a physical kingdom

1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:24, 50 - one involved in sins will not “inherit” the kingdom; at

His second coming, Jesus will *return* the kingdom of the Father

Gal. 5:21 - one involved in sins will not “inherit” the kingdom

Eph. 5:5 - one involved in sins will not “inherit” the kingdom

Col. 1:13; 4:11 - those obedient to Christ were *transferred* into the kingdom of Christ;

Christians are fellow workers for the kingdom

1 Thess. 2:12 - God is calling men and women into His own kingdom

2 Thess. 1:5 - we can be considered “worthy” of the kingdom!

2 Tim. 4:1, 18 - the kingdom was present, but there is also a “heavenly kingdom” (only here)

Hebrews 1:8; 12:28 - Psalm 45:7 predicted the Son would establish a kingdom and reign forever; in fulfillment of Habakkuk 2:6 and Daniel 2:44 (and others), we are *receiving* (present tense) God’s kingdom!

James 2:5 - we are “heirs” of the kingdom

2 Peter 1:11 - we still await an entrance into the “eternal kingdom” (only use)

Revelation (9 times) 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10 - Christians are *already* in the kingdom! the kingdoms of the world have been enveloped into the kingdom of the Lord and His Christ; the kingdom has come!

So when was the “kingdom” established?

When was the “church” established?

When was salvation from sins, through the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, made available?

Matthew 16:28 (kingdom will be established within the lifetime of Jesus’ audience); Luke 24:46-49 (the kingdom will come when the apostles are clothed with power and they preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins); Acts 1:6-8 (that power will come when the apostles are immersed in the Holy Spirit)

Acts 2:1-4 - the **kingdom / church** is established! Everything points to the day of Pentecost as the establishment of the kingdom / church!

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).

For our purposes, it really doesn’t matter who Norman Geisler is. I am using his book as a common presentation of premillennialism because relative to so many topics, Geisler is thorough and scholarly. He earned his doctorate in philosophy from Loyola University and has written more than 70 books. The particular book I will be using is his massive 1,000+ page tome called *Systematic Theology*. In this book, Geisler devotes 4 chapters to doctrines that are related to premillennialism. Now, as I present Geisler’s views of this doctrine, understand that premillennialists argue and debate among themselves; in other words, there are different versions of the premillennial doctrine. But, once we have examined Geisler’s presentation, we will have a good idea of the basic tenets of premillennial doctrine and will understand fundamentally why it is wrong.

The first chapter in Geisler’s book that deals with this topic is a chapter on “The Interpretation of Prophecy.” In this chapter, Geisler fundamentally makes his major mistake. While he believes there are types (Christ = Passover Lamb) and symbols (He says Revelation

“contains symbols from beginning to end” pg 1322), he also insists that *prophecies* have to be taken literally.

That position leads Geisler to believe that “Israel will have a unique role in the messianic kingdom, *functionally* superior to that of the Gentiles” (pg 1333; *emph. his*). To support that conclusion? He quotes Deuteronomy 10:15; 26:19; Isaiah 45:14; 2:2-3; and Romans 3:1-2; 9:4-5. Now, if you read these passages *in the context of Geisler’s book*, they might make sense. But, as you should *always* do when you are reading *uninspired man’s* writings, you should *study the context* of the passage (as Kenny Hickmott encouraged us to do Sunday evening!) and ask yourself: “If I didn’t have any *preconceived theological views*, would I draw the same conclusion Geisler is drawing? In other words, is it *obvious* that the text is saying what he wants it to say?”