

#7 - Revealing the Kingdom of God  
“A Permanent Role for (Physical) Israel?”  
“Premillennialism” as Presented by Norman Geisler

INTRODUCTION:

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.

We have emphasized Matthew 16:28 where Jesus promised that the kingdom would be established during the lifetime of His audience. I will quote Mark's account of that statement and you'll see why in just a moment (9:1):

“And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.” The key word here, that is missing in Matthew's account, is the word “power.” The kingdom would come “with power.”

Now, we go to Luke's version of the great commission - Luke 24:49

“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Here, Jesus commands the apostles to return to Jerusalem, as He ascends into heaven, and He will send the Holy Spirit (the “promise of the Father”) over them, and they will be “clothed with power from on high.”

Now we turn to Luke's second volume, the book of Acts, and we read again from Acts 1:6-8:

“So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Of course, the Holy Spirit came with power on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2:1-4, and Peter will state in Acts 2:33

2:1-4 - “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”

2:33 - “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

There are various other passages which will substantiate the point that the kingdom / church is in existence already in NT times:

Matthew 16:18-19 - the church / kingdom are the same institution - “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth

shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

The “tabernacle of David” - used as a synonym for the “kingdom of David” (Amos 9:11-12) refers to the kingdom/church which has been established (Acts 15:16-18).

Christians were “transferred” into the kingdom according to Colossians 1:13.

As individuals obey the Gospel, they are “receiving” (present tense verb) the kingdom, according to Hebrews 12:28.

When Jesus comes a second time for judgment, He will hand the kingdom over the Father, 1 Corinthians 15:24.

The Christians who received the book of Revelation were in the kingdom (Rev. 1:6, 9; 5:10).

#### 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).

I pointed out in our prior lesson, from the first chapter in Geisler’s book that deals with this topic from the chapter on “The Interpretation of Prophecy,” that Geisler fundamentally makes his major mistake. 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, we looked at those passages two weeks ago, but we will continue this line of thought for the time-being...

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 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?”

To word this another way, he is paraphrasing another scholar, H. H. Rowley, when R. K. Harrison writes: “writers who discover in the text what they themselves bring to it, instead of first finding what the text was intended to mean and then perceiving what it has come to mean, are a peril to themselves and to their readers alike” (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, 491). I believe Dr. Geisler makes that same fundamental mistake, bringing to a text what he wants it to say.

Again, Geisler believes “there will be a special future place for Israel collectively and nationally” (pg 1334; emph. his). To support that view, Geisler wants to say that the church’s status differentiates Israel from the Gentiles. To prove his point, he quotes: 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15; 1 Cor. 10:32. While the church is “grafted into” Israel, Geisler believes “national Israel is still a distinct entity,” based on Rom. 11:25-26.

Let us take a moment here to point out that the nation of Israel served its purpose in bringing Jesus into the world and once that purpose was fulfilled, Israel (as a nation) fulfilled its purpose. Notice these texts which argue that Israel is no longer (as a nation) a part of God’s plans...

Matthew 8:11-12 - the “sons of the kingdom” (Jews) will be cast out.

Matthew 21:38-44 - The kingdom of God (the relationship between humanity and God) will be taken away from “you” (Jews) and given to a people (Gentiles / Jews *who are in Christ!*), producing the fruit of the vineyard.

Acts 13:44-52 - When the Jews refused (or still refuse) to obey the gospel, they “judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.”

Romans 2:28-29 - Ask yourself if Paul is setting aside the nation of Israel and arguing that a relationship with God is now *completely dependent on a spiritual relationship with Christ!*?

1 Corinthians 7:19 - Circumcision (a *physical relationship to Abraham*) means nothing in God’s new covenant

2 Corinthians 3:7-11 - the law of Moses (which created the nation of Israel) was fading and was to be replaced.

Galatians 3:23-29 - *Who are the “children of Abraham?”* Now, let’s take a look at 6:11-16. *Who are the “Israel of God”?*

On Galatians 3:29, Geisler (pg. 1342):

“Abraham has both physical and spiritual descendants (Rom. 4:16), ...only the physical descendants who are true heirs of the promise are those who receive the promise by faith (9:6)...”

On Galatians 6:16, Geisler argues that “Israel of God” is not referring to the church (pg. 1339-40)

1. Paul says nothing about a spiritual Israel. He simply believes it refers to faithful *Israelites*. He compares it to “the circumcision who worship God” from Philippians 3:3.

2. The *context* is talking about Israelites who were *false teachers*.

3. He believes that *all passages* that refer to “Israel” is referring to “literal Jews, the physical descendants of Abraham and David” (e. g., cf. Rom. 9:3-4; 10:1). “*There is not one New Testament example of the word Israel being used in a spiritual sense; it always refers to ethnic Israel (emph. his).*”

**Is there any doubt that Geisler is wrong?**

Ephesians 2:11-18 - Christ abolished in His flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances. If that is the case, doesn’t it stand to reason that the *nation of flesh* which was created by the “law of commandments” also came to an end?

Philippians 3:3 - Christians are the “true circumcision.”

Colossians 2:9-15 - Jesus canceled out the “certificate of debt.”

Hebrews 8:7-13 - Observe that the old covenant, the law of Moses, was obsolete, growing old, and ready to disappear.

1 Peter 2:9 - The church is now wearing those designations which God had given to Israel in Exodus 19:5-6.