

#9 - Revealing the Kingdom of God
“A Permanent Role for the Land of Israel?
And Premillennialists’ Response to the ‘Kingdom’ Passages”
“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.

Here are the passages: Matthew 16:28 (particularly its parallel in Mark 9:1); Luke 24:49; Acts 1:6-8 - all fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4 wherein Acts 2:33 shows that Jesus sat on His throne, as *King* when He ascended into heaven. Based on Zechariah 6:12-13 and Psalm 110:1, 4, when Jesus *assumed His role as priest*, He became king, i. e., at His ascension.

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; Amos 9:11-12 (fulfilled in the church; see Acts 15:16-18); Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; 1 Corinthians 15:24; 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).

Notice these texts which argue that Israel is no longer (as a nation) a part of God’s plans...

Matthew 8:11-12; 21:38-44; Acts 13:44-52; Romans 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:19; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11; Galatians 3:23-29; 6:11-16; Ephesians 2:11-18; Doesn’t it stand to reason that the *nation of flesh* which was created by the “law of commandments” also came to an end at the cross? Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:9-15; Hebrews 8:7-13; 1 Peter 2:9.

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

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

HOW DOES PREMILLENNIALISM DEAL WITH THE “KINGDOM” PASSAGES?

This question takes up a whole chapter in Geisler’s book... Now, there are *some* passages which use “kingdom” to refer to the *consummation* of God’s plans: the kingdom in heaven: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:5; 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 1:11.

Geisler states that we have to distinguish the different forms in order to have a proper understanding of this topic (1348).

These designations are from Geisler:

1. God’s universal kingdom
2. God’s Messianic Kingdom
3. God’s Spiritual Kingdom (in a broad sense).
4. God’s spiritual kingdom (in the narrow sense).
5. God’s spiritual reign in the Church.
6. God’s overarching, constant, invisible, universal reign.

The next major section of Geisler's study is "The Messianic Kingdom"

Again, this is "the visible, earthly, political reign of the promised Jewish Messiah" (1351).

Geisler, citing another author, Alva McClain from *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, writes that the messianic kingdom has six aspects:

- 1) spiritual dimension
- 2) political dimension
- 3) ecclesiastical dimension
- 4) economic (social) dimension
- 5) physical dimension
- 6) moral dimension

What problem(s) do you see with this?

The verses Geisler uses are as follows: Genesis 49:10; Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 2 Samuel 7:11-12, 16-17 (doesn't Gabriel state that Jesus will rule over the house of David, sitting on his throne - Luke 1:32-33?) On this passage, Geisler notes that it was fulfilled at Mark 11:10; Matt. 21:9 and notes: "They [the Jews] were expecting the start of the promised messianic kingdom" (1353)."

Other passages Geisler uses: Isaiah 9:6 (Here, he argues that "Christ's deity *and* political reign are mentioned" (emph. his); Isaiah 11:11-12 ("this literal political restoration of the David kingdom") He goes on commenting on this text (1354): "Not only is this a literal prediction of a literal return to a literal land, it has been literally fulfilled in part since May 115, 1948, when Israel was declared a nation... If this has been literally fulfilled, why should there be any doubt about the restoration of the messianic political kingdom as well?" Isaiah 24:23 - "the center of Messiah's reign is specified" and "Zechariah speaks of Messiah's return to the place He left:" Zech. 14:4 (Incidentally, the Mount of Olives is referred to in the NT 12 times, all referring to the last week of Jesus on earth. *None of them refer to Jesus coming literally, physically, to the Mount of Olives!!!*) In this context, Geisler refers to Acts 1:11, stating: "Since they saw Him go visibly, physically, and gloriously, He will return visibly, physically, and gloriously..." This statement (and passage), of course, have nothing to do with premillennialism.