

## PREMILLENNIALISM

### LESSON 5 – DANIEL 2 AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

During the last two class periods we have been discussing and laying the groundwork about what the Bible actually says about the Kingdom of God and the Promises made to Abraham. These are extremely important topics to both amillennialism and Premillennialism. In our first lesson we asked the question; “Does God keep His promises?” To this question both the amillennialist and premillennialist would say “Yes”. The only difference is that the premillennialist would say “Yes, but He hasn’t yet.”

Beginning with today’s lesson we will start looking at specific errors of Premillennialism. Today we want to look specifically at the theories of “Rejection” and “Postponement”.

Let’s look at these theories;

#### **REJECTION:**

*“The purpose of the writing of the Gospel of Matthew was to record the presentation of Jesus Christ as Messiah, to trace the opposition to Him and His offered kingdom by the nation, and to record the official and final rejection of that King and kingdom by Israel. An analysis of the theme of Matthew will be undertaken to trace this argument because of its crucial relationship to the whole kingdom concept and program.*

*“There are three major movements in the Gospel of Matthew; (A) The presentation and authentication of the king (1:1-11:1); (B) The Opposition to the King (11:2-16:12); and (C) The final rejection of the King (16:13-28:20).” Dwight Pentecost “Things To Come” (pg 456)*

Later in his book, Mr. Pentecost, in reference to Matthew 12 says *“It is the great turning point in this Gospel and with it the offer of our Lord to Israel as their King, as well as the offer of the kingdom ceases!”*

Mr. Pentecost also argues; *“Some contend that neither the Lord nor John ever offered Israel an earthly kingdom, but only a spiritual kingdom. Such a view entirely fails to comprehend the nature of the “the kingdom” preached by John, the Lord, and His disciples.”*

#### **POSTPONEMENT:**

*“Because the nation has rejected Him, the Lord announces the severance of every natural tie by which He was bound to the nation (Matt: 46-50). From this announcement, definite movement may be traced in the withdrawal of the offer of the kingdom. In the parables (Matt 13:1-50) the Lord outlines the program in the development of the theocratic kingdom during the period of the King’s absence, and announces the inception of an entirely new, unheralded, and unexpected program – the church (Matt 16:13-20).*

Mr. Pentecost also makes it clear that to the premillennialist, Jesus came to do one thing, establish the earthly kingdom, but had to change His plans because of His rejection by the Jews, so He set up the church instead. *“It was after the rejection of Matthew 12:23-24 that the Lord first makes a prophecy of the coming church in Matthew 16. The church is manifestly an interruption of God’s program for Israel, which was not brought into being until Israel’s rejection of the offer of the Kingdom.”*

Walvoord makes the same claim; *“...the present age is a parenthesis or a time period not predicted by the Old Testament and therefore not fulfilling or advancing the program of events revealed in the Old Testament fore view...”*

You may be wondering where this theory gets support from the Old Testament? The premillennialist calls this theory a “Gap” where the prophetic clock stopped ticking when Jesus was rejected, and has not ticked at all since His crucifixion. Once the Lord comes again – then the clock will start ticking again for 1,000 years. To show this “gap” or “parenthesis” they turn to (among other places) Daniel 9 and make the claim that *“While the most literal interpretation of the first 69 weeks is thus afforded a literal fulfillment, nothing can be found in history that provides a literal fulfillment of the last seven weeks. It has been taken by many that this indicates a postponement of the fulfillment of the last seven years of the prophecy to the future preceding the second advent. If so, a parenthesis of time involving the whole present age is indicated.”*

I apologize for all the quotes but it is important to understand the way these theories are presented – so that they might be refuted.

To refute this theory we simply need to show from scripture the following;

- Who was rejected?
- What is the Nature of the Kingdom – Spiritual or Physical?
- Was Jesus’ teaching concerning the Kingdom consistent throughout His ministry or did He change like the premillennialist say he did around Matthew 12?

**WHO REJECTED WHOM?** The premillennialist says that Jesus came for one purpose, and that was to establish His earthly Kingdom. Let’s look at John 6:15. In this passage we see the Jews were so moved by the miraculous power of Jesus that they sought to take Him by force and make Him king. Why? If He could feed 5,000 with five loaves and two fish – then He could feed 10,000 soldiers. If He could feed 10,000, He could arm 10,000 or maybe 100,000 with weapons and so defeat this Roman enemy and we Jews can rule the world again!. The Millennialists tell us that this is the purpose for which He came, but our Lord proves this not to be the case. He refused to be their earthly king because that was not His purpose. **SO HE REJECTED THEM!**

## **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM – SPIRITUAL OR PHYSICAL?**

There are several verses to point this out but let's first look back at Daniel's prophecy.

As you remember Daniel received an answer directly from God for his prayer to understand Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He saw a great stature with a head of Gold, a body of Silver, legs of brass and feet and toes of iron mixed with clay. Daniel then goes on to explain that these represent four world powers to occur in succession. The Babylonian, Medo-Persian, the Macedonian or Greek, and the Roman empires. Then a stone "made without hands" rolled down and crushed the feet and destroyed the whole image together. Daniel then goes on to say that in the "days of those kings" (referring to the four kingdoms represented by the image) God will establish a kingdom and this Kingdom will never be destroyed – it will endure forever and ever and will be possessed by the saints of the most High (Dan 7:18). Therefore, we can see that the Kingdom of God that is prophesied in the Old Testament is an everlasting kingdom. There is no kingdom mentioned in the bible as lasting for a 1000 years. We notice four things concerning this kingdom; **(1)** It shall never be destroyed (Heb 12:28), **(2)** It shall not be left to other people (Dan 7:18, Matt 16:18-19; Rom 2:9; Rom 9:6-8; Phil 3:3) **(3)** It will possess and be victorious over all the kingdoms of the world (Rev 11:15), and **(4)** It will endure forever (Luke 1:33; Mic 4:7; Rev 22:3-5).

We saw last Sunday how Daniel and Joel defined the time in which this everlasting kingdom would be established, and Peter identifies the time by applying these prophecies to Pentecost in Acts 2. So we have the prophecy, the circumstances, the time and the fulfillment.

Now, did Jesus establish an earthly kingdom? Please read the following and answer the question;

1. Where is the kingdom of God? (Luke 17:20-21) and What does this mean?
2. John 18:36 – Where isn't the kingdom? And what does this mean?
3. Read Jer 31:33-34 and compare to the eighth chapter of Hebrews. What conclusions can you draw from these?
4. Col 1:12-14 – If there is no kingdom now, what can we say about the following; Light, Darkness, Saints, Blood, and Redemption?
5. Phil 3:20 – Where is our citizenship?

**DID JESUS “PULL” THE KINGDOM FROM THE JEWS HALF-WAY THROUGH HIS MINISTRY?**

Didn't Jesus change His message when He pulled the kingdom from the Jews in Matthew 21:43 after He was rejected by the Jews? Well first of all remember that it was Jesus who rejected the Jews and not the other way around (John 6:8-15). The answer is simply NO – the message was consistent all along. The Jews in Christ's day felt that since they were Jews and sons of Abraham and David, that they should possess the kingdom of God. But in Matt 3:1-2, 7-9, John the Baptist gives a blow to this thought when he says that God is able to raise up children unto Abraham from stones. And then Jesus in His statement in Matthew 21:43-44 gives the final blow to this thought and even refers to the “crushing stone” from Daniel's image. Paul later says in Romans that God never accepted anything other than spiritual Israel. Only those who obeyed his voice and kept His commands did He consider His – even if they were from Abraham and David – that didn't make them His children automatically. They might have been Jews – but not God's chosen people.

But let's see if Jesus was consistent with His teaching concerning the Kingdom. We have already seen from John 18:36 that at the end of His earthly ministry He was teaching that His kingdom was not of this world. But what about at the beginning?

Read the account of Nicodemus in John 3:1-15 (which occurred at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. How is one to enter the Kingdom? Only through a spiritual rebirth!!!

No other verse captures the eternal and spiritual concept of the kingdom better than Eph 3:10-11. Paul plainly says that the church was the eternal purpose of God where God would make known His manifold wisdom.

Thus we see that Christ's kingdom is spiritual, it will reign in the hearts of men, they enter the kingdom through willing obedience (Psa. 110:3) and the Kingdom of God is within us.

1. If Paul told the Thessalonians that Christ must “needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead” – how could this have been fulfilled if the Jews would have accepted him when He came the first time?
2. Read Mark 1:15 and explain it. If the “time is fulfilled” when Jesus said it was – how could we then say that he didn't fulfill it?

Hal Lindsey urges us to believe “Had the people received Him, He would have fulfilled the kingly prophecies (by establishing an earthly kingdom) in their day in addition to the ones regarding the suffering Messiah.”

How could this be? If the people had received him, they wouldn't have rejected Him. How then could we have suffered? If they had received him they wouldn't have rejected Him. If they received Him He would have established the earthly kingdom (so says Lindsey) but that would have meant the crown without the Cross. But what about 1 Peter

1:10f. Ryrie goes so far in his back peddling to say “From God’s viewpoint the fulfillment of Israel’s promised kingdom was never scheduled until the second advent though it was offered at the first advent.”

Do you see how this doesn’t make any sense? And you may be wondering why this makes a difference? McGuiggan conveys a conversation between an unbelieving Jew (or an atheist or a non-Christian you are trying to convince to follow the Lord) and a premillennialist;

JEW: How could Jesus Christ be God and Messiah if he failed to establish the kingdom of the prophets?

MILL: He didn’t fail, the kingdom wasn’t due at that time.

JEW: He said “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.”.

MILL: Yes, but he postponed its establishment.

JEW: I see, you mean it was scheduled to be set up in the first century but he postponed it.

MILL: Well...not exactly. The prophets in reality prophesied of a 20<sup>th</sup> century establishment, so although it was offered in the first century, it was scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

JEW: You mean the prophets said: The time will be fulfilled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century! And Jesus said: “The time is fulfilled in the first century? Now I know something is really wrong – you’ve got to choose between Jesus and the prophets. If you go with Christ you indict the prophets with being in error and therefore they are not of God. If you go with the Old Testament prophets you indict Jesus as a teacher of error therefore he is neither God nor the Messiah. Besides, he not only disagreed with the prophets, he failed to set up the kingdom.

MILL: Well, I can’t work all that out but I do know the Old Testament does teach a first century fulfillment.

JEW: Then Jesus was right in saying the time was fulfilled in the first century. If that is the case, he failed to establish the kingdom and therefore was not the Messiah. Or else his postponing of the kingdom indicts your exegesis of the Old Testament as false. You say the prophets scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> century but no one can postpone something which wasn’t due for 1900 years. You say he postponed, in the first century, what wasn’t due for 1900 more years. Did he ever say he postponed it?

MILL: Well, not really – but he must have since it wasn’t set up in the first.

JEW: So the postponement notion is really your idea to save Jesus the embarrassment of looking like a failure. Postponement requires the he believed it was to be set up in the first century. And still you say the Old Testament scheduled it for the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At least I don't profess to believe in Jesus – you make him look like a fool.

MILL: You've got to understand that God had it in his mind to set it up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but he didn't make that clear. He always intended to have it postponed and the Church put in its place for a period of time.

JEW: Do you get this from the Old Testament?

MILL: Not really, the Old Testament knows absolutely nothing about a postponement or anything like that.

JEW: It looks more and more to me that you people are tying yourselves up in knots trying to keep Jesus from looking like a failure. All your postponement talk, you admit, is without a word of support from the Old Testament; you don't get it from Jesus; you have him intending to set up the Messianic Kingdom in the first century even though the prophets scheduled it for the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and you've changed your own view several times since we began this talk.

This conversation goes on – but you can see how it goes.

