

## THE THEOCRATIC KINGDOM

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PROVING THE PHYSICAL-ONLY NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD | SESSION 7 | PROPS 69-77

This study is based on the three volume book, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, by George N.H. Peters. Written in 1883, these volumes contain 206 propositions about the Kingdom of God. The work is the most exhaustive work on the Kingdom ever published. The three-volume set is available from [www.DispensationalPublishing.com](http://www.DispensationalPublishing.com).

The entirety of the outline is either a quote, partial quote, or paraphrase of the words of George Peters.

*For propositions 69-74 see session 6*

### **PROP. 75. THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM, AS HELD BY THE CHURCHES ESTABLISHED BY THE APOSTLES, WAS PERPETUATED.**

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*Obs 1.* This doctrine, held by the earliest of the church fathers, is unbroken with the Apostles.

- Justin Martyr – “I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years<sup>7</sup> in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare”

*Obs 2.* “It was received not only in the Eastern parts of the Church, by Papias (in Phrygia), Justin (in Palestine), but by Irenaeus (in Gaul), Nepos (in Egypt), Apollinaris, Methodius (in the West and South), Cyprian, Victorinus (in Germany), by Tertullian (in Africa), Lactantius (in Italy), and Severus.”

*Obs. 4.* The evidence in favor of the general perpetuation of the doctrine is strengthened by the concessions of those who were among the first, and most bitter, opposers. Thus e.g. Jerome (Com. on Jes., 19:10), says: “that he durst not condemn the (Millennial) doctrine, because many ecclesiastical persons and martyrs affirm the same.”

*Obs. 6.* The extent to which the doctrine prevailed is also apparent from the Apocryphal books. The counterfeit is based upon the genuine.

*Obs. 8.* Various methods, lacking candor and fairness, are resorted to in order to avoid giving our doctrine *its pre-eminent historical status*. (Peter’s gives 10 examples of these methods in vol. 1, pages 487-491).

*Obs. 9.* Although the doctrine was opposed in the third and following centuries, yet it continued for some time to have many who held to it.

*Obs. 12.* It has been alleged by others, that, taking the church as a whole, and considering the vast multitude since the days of the apostles that have rejected the doctrine, but comparatively a small number have held to this view of the Kingdom;—and, hence, it ought to be rejected. We reply, that as numbers are no test of religions; as truth is not established by majorities; as doctrine is to be found in its purity in Scripture and not in the voice of the multitude.

*Those interested in history will want to consider Vol 1, pgs 494-497, in which Peter’s gives names of church Father’s who taught a premillennial, future-Kingdom view.)*

## PROP. 76. THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM WAS CHANGED UNDER THE Gnostic AND ALEXANDRIAN INFLUENCE.

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Obs. 1. The student will carefully notice that with the view the early church had of "*the Christship*," of *the Kingdom* as expressly covenanted and predicted, of *the postponement* of the Kingdom to the Second Advent, of *the speedy Coming* of the Messiah to inaugurate the Kingdom, of *the period of trial* intervening, etc., it was **simply impossible** for the early believers to identify the church as, in any sense, the Kingdom of God as covenanted and prophesied. It was **only when** the Scriptures and the promises were spiritualized, *when*, under the influence of release from persecution and incoming churchly prosperity, the church itself was exalted through civil patronage, that the Primitive doctrine was gradually but surely set aside, and *the church itself* was made (as by Origen) "*the mystic Kingdom of heaven*," or (as by Eusebius) "*the very image* of the Kingdom of Christ," or (as by Augustine) "*the City of God*." [bold mine]

Obs. 3. Gnosticism, with its varied forms and subtle modifications, was early prevailing, and whilst nearly all the doctrines of Christianity suffered under its molding influence, that of the Kingdom *especially* became, under its plastic manipulations, *one widely different* from the Scriptural and early church doctrine.

Obs. 4. It is well to keep in view the direct means employed to get rid of the Chiliastic idea of the Kingdom.

- Caius (or Gaius) and Dionysius first cast doubt upon the genuineness and inspiration of the Apocalypse.
- By rejecting the literal sense, and substituting a figurative or allegorical; this effectually modified covenant and prophecy.
- Such portions of the Old Testament as literally taught the doctrine, had their prophetic inspiration discredited.
- Accepting all the prophetic portions, and what could not be conveniently allegorized and applied to the church, was attributed to heaven for fulfillment (as seen in Origen and his followers).
- Making promises directly given to the Jewish nation as such, either conditional in their nature or else merely typical of the blessings accruing to Gentiles.

Obs. 7. Another cause which operated largely to diminish the belief in the doctrine of the Kingdom was the coldness and enmity which arose between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, when they separated into parties antagonistic to each other.

Obs. 8. Notably, the conversion of Constantine, the deliverance [from persecution] and exaltation of the church, and finally the union of State and church under Imperial supervision and protection, *served* to make Millenarianism *unpalatable*.

Obs. 11. The opposition to our doctrine, when once inaugurated, was greatly aided by the talent and ability of a few great names. Conspicuously among these is that of Augustine. Probably no work has appeared that had such a powerful influence in overwhelming the more ancient doctrine, as Augustine's leading one, *The City of God*. This was specially designed to teach the existence of the Kingdom of God in the church beside or contemporaneous with the earthly or human Kingdom.

Obs. 12. The cessation, in almost a total manner, of the conversion of the Jews, also materially aided in extinguishing the doctrine of the Kingdom. Spiritualizing and allegorizing both the covenants and prophecies, changing the significant title of "The Christ" into a mere doctrinal name, heaping upon

Gentiles the promises belonging to the Jews, substituting the church for the Messianic Kingdom in its true covenanted Theocratic form, the conversion of Jews was arrested, and, as a result, the advocates of premillennialism were proportionately lessened.

PROP. 77. THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM, AS HELD BY THE EARLY CHURCH, WAS FINALLY ALMOST EXTERMINATED UNDER THE TEACHING AND POWER OF THE PAPACY.

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This is so plain a historical fact that it needs no special evidence to sustain it.

Obs. 5. It may then be briefly stated as a self-evident fact, that the entire spirit and aim of the Papacy is antagonistic to the early church view, being based on coveted ecclesiastical and secular power, on extended jurisdiction lodged in the hands of a Pope.

Obs. 6. The institution of monkery exerted a powerful influence in causing the rapid decline of our doctrine. From the fourth century down, they greatly molded or impressed the sentiments and views of the church, and, therefore, the student, in estimating the causes leading to a suppression of premillennialism must not forget to estimate the leverage exerted by monkery.

Obs. 8. Theology, under the constant surveillance of a church jealous of its delegated kingly authority, in its more systematic arrangements, was entirely controlled so as to favor the substituted Kingdom.