

THE THEOCRATIC KINGDOM

PROVING THE PHYSICAL-ONLY NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD | SESSION 8 | PROPS 78 -84

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.

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

PROP. 78. THE EARLY CHURCH DOCTRINE WAS REVIVED AFTER THE REFORMATION.

Obs. 1. Held in various manners, many reformers held to a Kingdom that is pre-eminently Messianic, they all believed was introduced by a personal Advent and a prior resurrection of the saints.

Obs. 2. While some of the Reformers entertained *partly* Chiliastic views, others expressed themselves in a way *contradictory* to pure Millenarianism

Obs. 3. Many of the reformers were not directly premillennial in doctrine. They (as e.g. Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox) occupied the Augustinian or Popish position, viz.: that the church, in some sense, was the Kingdom of God (preparatory to a higher stage), and that the Millennial period (one thousand years) included *this* dispensation or gospel period (some of the Millennial descriptions being applicable only to a future period either in heaven or the renewed earth), and hence was nearing its close. The simple truth in reference to them is this: that they were not Chiliasts, although teaching several points *that materially aid* in sustaining Chiliasm.

In numerous further observations (36 in all), Peters lists dozens of names of theologians in the USA, Canada, and Europe who hold to some degree of premillennial doctrine. This would be a great resource for a study of premillennial belief.

Obs. 22. However respectable the number of adherents to our doctrine in whole or in part, yet they form but a small minority in comparison with the immense body that rejects the belief once so prevailing in the church.

Obs. 24. Ignorance or malice, alone, can produce the charge of "heresy," so often, with evident relish, urged against Pre-Millenarians.

- We give a few illustrations out of many such charges. Prof. Briggs, in the N.Y. Evangelist, Sept. 12th, 1878, pronounces Pre-Millenarianism a "heresy," and "the basis of a most pernicious series of doctrines, ever rejected by the Church as fanatical, visionary, and dangerous.

Obs. 29. The survival of Chiliasm, amidst the opposition, ridicule, persecution, etc., of the past centuries, is worthy of notice. Dr. West (*His. of the Doc.*) has some forcible remarks on this point, showing "that only because it is *an imperishable truth of God* has it been able to survive the ordeal which it has passed."

PROP. 79. THE KINGDOM OF GOD, PROMISED BY COVENANT AND PROPHETS, IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE GENERAL AND UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

This is, owing to lack of discrimination, a most fruitful source of mistake. Take the Kingdom in its initiatory form and its covenanted and predicted aspect, and it will be found widely different from the Sovereignty that God exercises by virtue of His God-headship. The latter indeed is the source of the former, but the Kingdom of covenant is a visible, outward Theocratic Kingdom, manifested here on earth, identified with a certain people, promised in a definite manner, and ruled over by "the man ordained."

Obs. 4. A specified Theocratic Kingdom, incorporating the Davidic throne, which once existed, which was withdrawn, and which is promised to be restored under David's Son, is something widely different from the general Sovereignty of the Almighty over the universe. So plain, and simple, and self-evident is this Proposition, that no more space is required in its consideration.

PROP. 80. THIS KINGDOM OF COVENANT PROMISE AND PREDICTION, IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE SOVEREIGNTY WHICH JESUS EXERCISES BY VIRTUE OF HIS DIVINE NATURE.

Obs. 1. It may be premised, in order to avoid misconception, that Jesus now in His Divine nature, in His Oneness with the Father, does exercise a dominion over all things.

Obs. 4. It is amazing that theologians, without observing the contradiction involved, confound the Divine Sovereignty with the covenanted Kingship of Jesus, and yet acknowledge that Romans 14:9; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 12:2, etc., teach that "the ground of His dominion is to be found in His obedience unto death, the death of the cross" (so Oosterzee's Dogmatics). Now certainly the Divine Sovereignty is not grounded in any such contingency, but the Kingship pertaining to Jesus, as the Son of David, is based upon His obedience.

Obs. 5. There are some things which essentially belong to Jesus as the Son of God, as One with God; and there are other things which appertain to Him as "the Christ," the Divine-human.

Obs. 6. As if purposely to guard us against the error which is so largely prevalent, the phrase "Son of God" is not employed in direct connection with the Kingdom of heaven to be set up on earth. Indeed, our argument thus far indicates that such a declaration, as e.g. that the Kingdom is given to Jesus in view of His being the Son of God, would be utterly opposed to the Abrahamic-Davidic covenant, for it would virtually then be saying that God gives the Kingdom to God, phraseology so hostile to propriety that the Spirit avoids it.

- See Matthew 26:63-64 and John 1:49-51 where Jesus carefully separates the Son of God and Son of Man titles.

PROP. 81. THIS KINGDOM, THUS COVENANTED, BELONGS TO JESUS AS "THE SON OF MAN."

Obs. 2. Various reasons are assigned by theologians for the use of this phrase "the Son of Man," a favorite with Jesus, such as its reference to the incarnation, to His relationship with man, to His being the predicted man, to his special peculiarity of personality, to His humiliation, condescension, and lowliness, to His being the ideal or representative man, etc. Now whatever of truth may be attached to any of these, the true reason for its usage appears to be the following: it is the peculiar, distinctive, predicted name of the Messiah given to Him in virtue of His covenanted relationship to the Kingdom.

Obs. 4. The most fruitful source of misinterpreting this Kingdom arises from not discriminating to whom this Kingdom is specially promised. According to the covenant—and this must necessarily be the basis of a correct Scriptural representation—it is promised to the Son of David, the, Son of Man.

Obs. 5. The Theocracy is promised to this Son of Man, and this teaches us to anticipate two things. (1) The Theocracy is a visible, outward Kingdom. (2) The very phrase "the Son of Man" implies and necessitates the visibility of His Coming and reign; to spiritualize it away destroys both its covenanted force and the fulfillment of covenant promise.

Obs. 7. Hence at the Second Coming there must be, in order to fulfill the oath-bound covenant made with David, a real, veritable Son of David.

Obs. 8. The critical reader will not fail to notice that the Incarnation is a covenanted necessity, and that it forms a fundamental part of our system of faith; for without it the fulfillment of covenant promises would be impossible.

PROP. 82. THIS KINGDOM IS A COMPLETE RESTORATION IN THE PERSON OF THE SECOND ADAM OR MAN, OF THE DOMINION LOST BY THE FIRST ADAM OR MAN.

The reign of Christ as “the Son of Man” points us back to the fall in which humanity was so sadly involved, and then forward to the period when humanity, through this manifestation of this Son of Man, is fully restored to the blessings forfeited by the fall. One reason man was created in God’s image was to exert God’s dominion over creation.

Obs. 2. All Christian writers on the subject inform us that this dominion is restored to man again through Jesus Christ, the second Adam. But, with the exception of Millenarian writers, they spiritualize the dominion, and do not allow its ultimate realization in the very place where it was forfeited, i.e. they refuse to believe in man’s restored dominion over the earth, and make thus an imperfect Redemption.

Obs. 4. Hence, while this dominion is even now lodged in the Son of Man, yet it is held in abeyance until the period of its manifestation in and through this Kingdom. Therefore it is erroneous (as a multitude of writers, including Hodge, Barnes, etc.), to say that this dominion was fully attained and realized by the incarnation and the exaltation of the Son of God. So long as the Davidic tabernacle is in ruins, this dominion cannot and will not be exerted.

Obs. 5. It is only in the Millennial age, when this Theocratic Kingdom is established, that this forfeited dominion is fully restored. This is evident from the vivid descriptions, not only of the universal and absolute rule of Christ, but also of the dominion and glory of the saints. Hence this era must be preceded by the Coming of “the Son of Man”

Obs. 6. If such an external, outward dominion is lacking in the history of the earth, then an important restitution is wanting, and we receive an imperfect Redemption; with its restoration we obtain an important element of perfected Salvation.

Obs. 7. This dominion, promised, predicted and restored, is corroborative of the Biblical account of man’s noble origin and high destiny, forming quite a contrast to the ignoble theories of recent scientists.

PROP. 83. THIS KINGDOM IS GIVEN TO THE SON OF MAN BY GOD, THE FATHER.

This bestowal of the Kingdom to the Son of Man by the Father, is clearly and explicitly taught in the covenant. Hence in agreement with it, we have the language of Daniel 7:13–14; Isaiah 49; Luke 22:29 and 1:32, etc. [Rev. 1:1].

Obs. 1. This giving of the Kingdom by the Father to the Son of Man, shows, what has already been observed, that this Kingdom is something very different from the general Divine Sovereignty exercised by God.

Obs. 2. This Kingdom is given to the Son of Man at a particular, definite time. We note--

- (1) that as this Kingdom is unalterably associated with David’s Son restoring the fallen Theocratic-Davidic throne and Kingdom, and as such a restoration has not yet been experienced, it must, in the very nature of the case, be still in the future;
- (2) that the peculiar phraseology, corroborated by the prophets and applied by Jesus, unmistakably refers it to the Second Advent, which we have already seen, is the designated time for taking the Kingdom. Down to the present the covenant remains unfulfilled, and the Kingdom continues postponed until the times of the Gentiles have elapsed.

Obs. 3. By simply keeping in the line of *the covenanted Kingdom* which the Father in the appointed time, still future, will bestow upon the Son of David, we know how to estimate that vast mass of mystical conceptions and spiritualistic descriptions given by Origen, Swedenborg, Randolp, and a host of others, of *the predicted Kingdom being now already realized* in some form, or to be experienced *immediately after death*. The Kingdom to exist necessitates, as a primary condition, the restoration of the Davidic throne and Kingdom, seeing that the Theocratic ordering is bound up with the same. A Theocracy, without such a restoration, is, as covenant and promise teach, an idle dream. (emphasis mine).

Obs. 8. The exact time when the Father will give this Kingdom to “the Son of Man” is not revealed.

PROP. 84. AS THIS KINGDOM IS SPECIALLY GIVEN TO THE SON OF MAN AS THE RESULT OF HIS OBEDIENCE, SUFFERINGS, AND DEATH, IT MUST BE SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM HIS DIVINE NATURE, OR FROM "PIETY" "RELIGION" "GOD'S REIGN IN THE HEART," ETC.

Obs. 2. Some of the most eminent writers and commentators not knowing *how* to escape the dilemmas incident to their theory of a present existing Kingdom of promise, gravely tell us that this Kingdom is "piety," or "religion," or the most favorite phrase (as *e.g.* Dr. McCosh, and others), "God's reign in the heart." We leave them to reconcile a Kingdom *of promise, specially* covenanted to the Son of David in the line of his humanity, and for which He rendered Himself worthy on account of obedience, with *such interpretations* as these. If piety, religion, God's reign in the heart, etc., is *the Messianic Kingdom*, we may well ask what need of such promises of the Kingdom *in* the Davidic line and why not then date the Kingdom from Adam down to the present, seeing that "piety" or "religion," or "God's reign in the heart," has existed continuously? A host of questions suggested by our various Propositions indicate *the utter absurdity* of such a definition.

Obs. 3. The tender of the Kingdom to the Jewish nation, its rejection, postponement, the peculiar style of preaching of the first preachers—all go to show that "piety," etc. existed with a certain portion of the Jews, without the establishment of the Kingdom. Yet even those who advocate that Christ's Kingdom was only inaugurated after His death take this unguarded position, just as if these things were not previously exhibited. Their definition is inconsistent with their own admissions, and fatal to a distinctive Kingdom given to the Son of Man. It is not necessary to press this point.