

THE THEOCRATIC KINGDOM

PROVING THE PHYSICAL-ONLY NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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. 1. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS A SUBJECT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE

Obs. 1. Its importance may be estimated by considering the following particulars

1. It is an object of an oathbound covenant.
2. It is the great theme of prophecy.
3. It is a subject which embraces a larger portion of revelation than all other subjects.
4. It was the leading subject of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples and apostles.
5. It was the cherished subject of preaching in the early church.
6. It is foundational to a correct teaching of the Gospel itself.
7. To promote its establishment, Jesus appears, suffers, and dies, and to manifest the Kingdom Jesus will return in glory.
8. It is the distinguishing blessing and honor given to Jesus Christ by His Father.
9. It is the inheritance of the saints.
10. Jesus' followers were instructed to seek it, pray for it, and hope for it.
11. It is the result of preparatory dispensations, enabling us to appreciate events from previous dispensations.
12. In it all the promises of God are verified and realized.
13. It brings divine decrees, instructions, and Scriptures into unity.
14. It enforces the need of both the humanity and the Divinity of Jesus the Messiah.
15. It displays the glory of Jesus Christ as theocratic King and First-born of all creation.

Obs. 2. It is significant to the thoughtful student—a fulfillment of prophecy—that the idea of a distinctive Divine kingdom related to Christ and this earth, a kingdom which decidedly holds the foremost place in the teaching of Jesus, should be made to come down from its first position in the Bible and occupy, when alluded to, *a very subordinate one*, both in theology and the confessions of the Church.

Obs. 3. The kingdom deserves the first place in Biblical and the first rank in Systematic theology.

Obs. 4. In proportion to our learning about the Kingdom we will discover valuable knowledge in all areas of theology and faith.

Obs. 5. That the subject of the kingdom is one widely acknowledged as a primary subject can even be seen in the most extreme views (Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Shakerism).

Obs. 6. This subject is attractive to the reverent believer not merely because of its being the absorbing theme of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament prediction, but owing to *the personal relationship* that he sustains, as an heir, to it.

Obs. 7. When one looks at past Biblical events in the light of the Kingdom to which they point, perplexing history begins to make sense. The kingdom embraces so much, both in preparation and in actual realization, that, in view of its extent, the doctrine exceeds all others in magnitude, enfolded in itself nearly all doctrine.

Obs. 8. A deeper investigation of this doctrine and a correspondent return to the old faith, held by men who, by position and association (as *e.g.* Apostolical Church), were pre-eminently qualified to comprehend it, will remove those painful concessions now made to unbelief, which stigmatizes the apostles and early Church as still under the influence of “erroneous Jewish forms.”

PROP. 2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS KINGDOM WAS DETERMINED BEFORE, AND DESIGNED AND PREPARED FROM, THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

Matthew 25:34, John 17:24, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 4:3, I Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8

Compare Matthew 13:35, Luke 11:50, Revelation 17:8. Whatever application these passages may have to the future kingdom, we cannot rid ourselves of the plainly implied meaning that, in the mind of the Divine Architect and Purposer, the contemplated final use of this world was allied with its origin.

Obs. 1. We should infer *dignity* on this subject, because we comprehended the eternal will and “purpose of Him, which worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”

Obs. 2. We also justly infer, that God’s will thus expressed respecting the kingdom indicates *a Divine plan*, which, in view of His attributes, necessarily embraces *unity of design*.

Obs. 3. The idea of the kingdom being thus identified in its connection with eternal purpose and with creation, God will *undoubtedly accomplish* His revealed will concerning it, confirmed as it is even by oath. God Himself *stands pledged* to the ultimate realization of this idea.

Obs. 4. The exercise of creative power, and its continued exhibition in behalf of man and the world, clearly shows *the Divine determination* to establish this kingdom

Obs. 5. This kingdom is one pertaining to the earth.

We know that the expression “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” is interpreted by many simply to mean, prepared for you from the beginning or from eternity, and refers only to purpose. But taking into consideration the paradise condition of the earth at creation and the fact of its future restoration to the same when the kingdom is to be established, we believe that the phrase embraces a far deeper significance, namely, its relationship to the earth. “From the foundation of the world” is indicative that God purposed this very earth, when founded, for this kingdom.

Obs. 6. Such phraseology involves, of necessity, owing to the fall and entailed curse, a glorious restitution for which provision is to be made.

Obs. 7. This phraseology respecting the kingdom includes, in view of expressed predetermination, the appointment or preordination of the king (I Peter 1:20). It also comprehends the number of the rulers, elect, heirs or inheritors of the kingdom (Ephesians 1:4, etc.), as well as every particular, provisionary and realized, pertaining to it. God does not undertake the accomplishment of a set purpose without His perfect knowledge embracing all things relating to it. For “known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

Obs. 8. The idea of the kingdom being the beginning (*i.e.*, leading to creation, etc.) and the ending (*i.e.*, embracing the final result) of the dispensations or ages, we may well believe what the Scriptures state concerning it, namely, that this idea is carried on to a practical accomplishment in order that the supremacy and authority of God may be universally acknowledged, and that the manifold wisdom and love of the Lord may be displayed and experienced in the eternal ages.

Obs. 9. This language, so expressive of the comprehensiveness and fundamental nature of the kingdom idea, suggests to us that the dispensations or ages themselves (the Adamic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Christian) are ordered in their succession as part of the Divine purpose in relation to this kingdom.

Obs. 10. The kingdom being comprehended in the eternal counsels of God and in the design of creation, we ought reasonably to anticipate it to be a deeply involved, widely comprising subject.

Obs. 11. The proposition indicates a fundamental position that the student of the kingdom must occupy. It implies that as the kingdom is God’s purpose, all knowledge of the kingdom must be derived from Him.

PROP. 3. THE MEANINGS USUALLY GIVEN TO THIS KINGDOM INDICATE THAT THE MOST VAGUE, INDEFINITE NOTIONS EXIST CONCERNING IT.

“Theologians, eminent for their piety and position in the Church, are now entertaining crude ideas and contradictory conceptions of the kingdom. For many centuries, under the interpretation given by men who have, probably unconsciously, largely imbibed the spirit of the Alexandrian school, the kingdom has been made to mean a variety of things at the option of the writer. Modern authors, with but few exceptions, instead of discarding this looseness, seem to revel in it, making the kingdom to denote almost everything that fancy connects with religion, or the Church, or even with humanity.”

- Albert Barnes gives at least 12 different definitions of the Kingdom.
- Charles Hodge: “The kingdom of God, therefore, as consisting of those who acknowledge, worship, love, and obey Jehovah as the only living and true God, has existed in our world ever since the fall of Adam.”

Obs. 8. Those who give us such definitions, antagonistic to the primitive Church view, exhibit also the greatest diversity among themselves respecting the commencement of this kingdom in its supposed present form. They are as little agreed concerning its beginning as in its meaning.

Obs. 12. The only way to rid ourselves of these ill-defined and antagonistic explanations, is to adopt legitimate principles of interpretation, and then carefully, in detail, examine the original covenants and promises upon which the kingdom is based; and if we have obtained a definition strictly in accordance with these, never to depart from the same, without the most express—not inferential—proof in hand that a change is denoted.

Obs. 13. It is a lamentable fact, that few theologians are to be found who are willing to give a rigid scriptural examination to this subject.

Instead of making Holy Writ the standard of interpretation, multitudes, while in theory recognizing the Bible as the sole measure of faith, yet in practice will take the explanations and Scriptural references given by favorite authors as their reliable guides, without the least attempt to verify, by a personal application to Scripture, their correctness.

Obs. 14. Many shrink from investigation when they find that things which they fondly believed, incorporated in their prayers and hopes, and portrayed with eloquence, are subject to the suspicion of being built upon a sandy foundation.

PROP. 4. THE LITERAL, GRAMMATICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES MUST (CONNECTED WITH THE FIGURATIVE, TROPICAL, OR RHETORICAL) BE OBSERVED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THIS KINGDOM.

Obs. 2. The only true standard of interpretation is the grammatical (aided by the historical)

Obs. 8. While urging a literal interpretation, we are, as already intimated, equally opposed to that ultra-literalism which makes no allowance for the figures of speech incident to all language. Tropical usage is by no means an evidence of ambiguity or weakness; it is rather that of clearness and strength, for according to the decided testimony of rhetoricians, its design and province is (Blair's *Rhet.*, S. 14) to "illustrate a subject, or throw light upon it," or (Jamieson's *Rhet.*, p. 138) "to give us, frequently, a much clearer and more striking view," etc.

Obs. 9. To prove that our proposition is wrong in limiting the interpretation of the Bible by the laws of language, as universally held, it must be shown:

- That the Bible in its usage of language is an exception to all other books.
- That the subject-matter, superior to that contained in other books, is not conveyed to us through the common channel of language in the ordinary way.
- That a sense beyond that given by the rules of language is a legitimate one, and either, in some manner, drawn from language itself or found incorporated or announced in the Word.
- Some rules or directions for ascertaining and applying this additional sense, so that it may be easily recognized and not arbitrarily used.
- Some decided—not inferential—examples of such a sense being determined and enforced by the Bible, in order to elevate it to a justly recognizable rank. In this way we may, perhaps, be enabled to appreciate that overwhelming stream of scholasticism, mysticism, and spiritualism pervading our theological literature.

PROP. 5. THE DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM IS BASED ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

Obs. 1. All that we know of the covenanted kingdom was spoken by holy men of old as they were professedly moved by the Holy Spirit.

Obs. 2. The doctrine of the kingdom is based on inspiration, because it is a doctrine which, as delineated, we ourselves, unaided, could never have produced and developed.

Obs. 3. Deny the inspiration of the Word, and then it becomes merely the word or conjecture of man.

Obs. 4. Occupying this position at the outset, we insist upon it that the apostles were fully and accurately acquainted with the doctrine of the kingdom, *i.e.*, as to its nature, and hence were qualified to teach it.

PROP. 6. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH THE SUPERNATURAL.

The whole Bible, whose leading theme is the kingdom, is grounded on the supernatural. Remove this, and you destroy, if not the book itself, the chief characteristic, the distinguishing excellency of the Scriptures.

PROP. 7. THE KINGDOM BEING A MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL, MIRACLES ARE CONNECTED WITH IT.

The supernatural is indispensable for the establishment of the kingdom, and the kingdom will be exerted in miraculous power whenever required.