

THE THEOCRATIC KINGDOM

PROVING THE PHYSICAL-ONLY NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD | SESSION 9 | PROPS 85-98

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.

for Proposition 84, see session 8

PROP. 85. NEITHER ABRAHAM, NOR HIS ENGRAFTED SEED HAVE AS YET INHERITED THE KINGDOM: HENCE THE KINGDOM MUST BE SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM “PIETY” “RELIGION” AND “GOD’S REIGN IN THE HEART?”

Obs. 1. This is a substitution of the means by which the Kingdom is obtained for the Kingdom itself.

PROP. 86. THE OBJECT OR DESIGN OF THIS DISPENSATION IS TO GATHER OUT THESE ELECT, TO WHOM, AS HEIRS WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED, CHRIST, THIS KINGDOM IS TO BE GIVEN.

Note: While Peters makes some good points in this Proposition, I disagree with him concerning the design of this dispensation. He fails, in my estimation, to recognize this dispensation as a mystery unrelated to the Kingdom. Peters made this mistake in Prop. 61 and 64 also, where he makes the believers of this age to become the elect for the Kingdom.

Obs. 1. It is not necessary, under this heading, to notice two mistakes by which the affirmation of the Proposition is obscured by error, viz.: (1) the regarding this dispensation as the final one, and (2) the belief in the conversion of the world before the Second Advent.

Obs. 2. If our argument has any logical force, based on the plain grammatical sense of covenant, and prophecy, and fact,—if it has any Scriptural weight in insisting upon a restored Theocratic order under David’s Son here on the earth where the previous Theocratic rule was inaugurated,—then the absence of such a Theocracy in the form covenanted, itself is sufficient to indicate that a dispensation or ordering under the personal reign of David’s Son is still future, and that the Millennial glory in the blessedness of nations will only then be realized.

Obs. 4. Our argument regards this dispensation as preparative to the Kingdom....

- *One should question the assumptions about this observation. Is there any way in which this dispensation is shown to be “preparative to the Kingdom?”*

PROP. 87. THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE KINGDOM IS THE KEY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF THIS DISPENSATION.

If our position is correct (and we deem it, as the early church did, impregnable) then it follows, as a matter of course, that many things now applied by theologians to this dispensation have no relation whatever to it.

Obs. 1. It is a rule, more frequently violated than observed, that for a correct understanding of Scripture we should pay attention to the particular dispensation to which portions of it are intended to apply. Volumes, otherwise containing valuable matter, are destroyed by bringing nearly all Scripture to be applicable to the present time, or dispensation.

Obs. 2. Among the things which the postponement of the Kingdom effectually removes, is the prevailing opinion that the Church is the promised Kingdom of the Messiah. Admit the postponement, and it will be impossible to make the church, as present constituted, said Kingdom. For, if postponed, how could it be in existence?

PROP. 88. THE CHURCH IS THEN A PREPARATORY STAGE FAR THIS KINGDOM.

Note: I have the same disagreement with Peters here as in Prop. 86. In both, he assumes that this dispensation is related to the Kingdom rather than a mystery from the Kingdom. Peters wrongly believed that the church was the gathering of the elect, and once the gathering was complete that the church would become the Kingdom. In his argumentation on this proposition, Peters explains why the church is not currently the Kingdom, a point well taken.

Obs. 2. If we are wrong in this, and other Propositions linked with it, it can be easily decided against us by producing a passage where the church is directly called a Kingdom.

Obs. 6. Many, impelled by the idea that if the church is a Kingdom there ought, of necessity, to be a unity, have sought for this in various ways—in an outward union of believers, in an exact agreement of doctrine, in some form of church government, etc. Whereas, if they had retained the belief of the earliest age respecting the church, they would have seen that the uniformity they sought after is not a prerequisite. Diversity, as seen in the Apostolic Churches by contrasting the Jewish and Gentile, is not opposed to the Scriptural idea of the church.

PROP. 89. CHRIST IN VIEW OF THIS FUTURE KINGDOM, SUSTAINS A PECULIAR RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH.

Obs. 1. To say then, whatever may be the honored position of Jesus in heaven, that He now is reigning in the covenanted, predicted Kingdom of promise, is directly opposed to God's oath-bound covenant.

PROP. 90. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, WHO ARE FAITHFUL, ARE PROMISED THIS KINGDOM.

Obs. 1. If the church is the Kingdom, and believers are now in it, why designate them "heirs," etc., of a Kingdom?

Obs. 7. Prophecy does not predict a Kingdom to exist between the First and Second Advents of Christ as a prelude to the Kingdom of the Eternal Ages. To make out such a prediction, Prophecy must be wrested from its connection, or else it must be spiritualized to make it sufficiently accommodating.

PROP. 91. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT THE JEWISH CHURCH.

Note: in this proposition, Peters makes the false notion of a Jewish church and a Christian church. In actuality, there was not Jewish church, only a Jewish nation.

PROP. 92. THE THEOCRATIC KINGDOM IS NOT WHAT SOME CALL "THE GOSPEL KINGDOM."

It is a phrase of human coinage, nowhere found in the Bible, and is incorrect when applied to the present time.

PROP. 93. THE COVENANTED KINGDOM IS NOT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Obs. 1. The Christian Church is an association of believers in Christ, who, led by the same consciousness of God, truth and spirit, accept of the terms of salvation.... It is an association exclusively for religious purposes, separate and distinct from civil or secular interests.

Obs. 2. The first churches and the apostolic Fathers and their immediate successors, as already shown had no conception of the Church being the promised Kingdom of the Covenant and Prophets. They looked and prayed for its speedy coming at the Second Advent. Origen was the first one who made the Church the mystic Kingdom of God.

Obs. 10. The church, instead of being represented as a Kingdom, is held up to us as *a struggling, suffering* people, Colossians 1:24; II Timothy 1:8; II Corinthians 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.

Obs. 11. Those modern phrases of ministers and people, “of extending, enlarging, building up, etc., *Christ’s Kingdom*” are *not to be found* in the New Testament. They are the result of viewing the church as the Kingdom. The absence of such phraseology and eulogies of the church descriptions must also have some weight with the student. For, if the church is what the many tell us, then surely we ought to find the portrayals of it as a glorious Kingdom to be extended by believers given by inspired men.

PROP. 94. THE OVERLOOKING OF THE POSTPONEMENT OF THIS KINGDOM IS A FUNDAMENTAL MISTAKE, AND A FRUITFUL SOURCE OF ERROR IN MANY SYSTEMS OF THEOLOGY.

Obs. 10. Jesus having come to fulfill the Prophets, and that fulfillment being in large part postponed to the Second Advent, the statements of the Prophets remain and include in them a sufficiency of information needed. To fully know what His mission was, and how it will be eventually realized, we must refer not merely to His life, to the preaching and testimony of His disciples, but also to what the Prophets have written, ever remembering that the covenants form the basis of all pertaining to the Kingdom.

Obs. 11. By this postponement the special Davidic covenant remains unfulfilled (excepting that David’s Son and Lord is born, and qualified for the immortal reign), and “the tabernacle of David” continues “fallen down” and “in ruins,”—“The house” remains “desolate.”

Obs. 15. This doctrine of the postponement rebuts the unbelieving attacks against the Messianic Kingdom and the attempted explanations concerning it.

PROP. 95. IF THE CHURCH IS THE KINGDOM, THEN THE TERMS “CHURCH” AND “KINGDOM” SHOULD BE SYNONYMOUS.

Obs. 1. It may be proper to illustrate the application of the Test. A few examples will suffice:

- Mark 9:47, 11:10, Luke 12:32, 22:29, Acts 14:22.

Obs. 2. But the absurdity of making such terms synonymous will be more clearly seen if we take the definitions given of this Kingdom, and observing their intimate connection with this church notion.

- If the Kingdom is “wherever God rules and reigns” is the church the same?

Obs. 3. Such substitutions are *unwarranted and dangerous*, although presented by most able men.

PROP. 96. THE DIFFERENCES VISIBLE IN THE CHURCH ARE EVIDENCES THAT IT IS NOT THE PREDICTED KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH.

The Kingdom, as promised from the details of prophecy, is to exhibit a visible outward unity. So much is this admitted by our opponents, that they are seeking for and advocating such a unity. The feeling is almost universal that prediction demands it; and hence all, not finding it yet existing, anticipate it in the future. Isaiah 60, 61, 62, 65, etc., are conclusive. But, on the other hand, such a state or condition has never been realized in the church after eighteen hundred years of trial, and therefore we conclude that the church, not exhibiting the characteristics predicted of the Kingdom and connected with its establishment, is something different from that Kingdom. (emphasis mine.)

Obs. 1. Let the unbiased student contemplate how schisms, etc., are foretold in the church (Acts 20:29–30; I Corinthians 11:19; II Timothy 4:3–4; Romans 16:17, etc.)

Obs. 2. The progress of the church teaches the same. Surely a Kingdom established by Jesus in fulfillment of the prophecies could not possibly have the conflicting elements that the church has so lavishly shown.

Obs. 4. This leads to a brief consideration of the unity of the church. The notion of a Kingdom attached to it, involves that of unity. To carry out the design of the church does not necessarily require unity; unity indeed would facilitate its execution, and for various reasons it is desirable, and hence is enjoined, but really is not essential, as the history of the church conclusively proves.

PROP. 97. THE VARIOUS FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT INDICATE THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT THE PROMISED KINGDOM.

Taking the prophetic record, which gives the Messianic Kingdom a uniform government with a uniform faith, it is impossible to accept of the church, with its diversified forms of government, as an intended exhibit of the Kingdom.

Obs. 1. While men differ in their interpretation of the church, yet it is generally admitted, excepting by the Roman Catholics and a High-Church party, that Christ did not found His church with an accurately defined and fixed form of government for its associated capacity, but left the forms it should assume in society, and among nations, to the development made by Providence and human agency. This view, perhaps slightly but not materially modified, is the belief of multitudes. If we accept of it, then it refutes the notion of the church being a Kingdom, for it admits at once that the church at its commencement lacked one of the essentials of a Kingdom, viz.: a regularly constituted form of government.

PROP. 98. THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT THE KINGDOM PROMISED TO DAVID'S SON WAS THE BELIEF OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

Obs. 1. If the church is the predicted Kingdom of God, we certainly ought to find some direct passage teaching this, either in the writings of the Apostles or their immediate successors.

Obs. 3. The strongest possible argument that the Apostle Paul could have used to convince the Thessalonians that they were mistaken as to the imminency of the Advent, would have been the modern one concerning the church, i.e. that Christ's Kingdom was established in the church, and that according to Daniel and the prophets a long career of honor and dominion was before it, for it would be folly to suppose that a Kingdom just newly set up should so speedily come to an end without fulfilling the prophecies.