

What Did Jesus Teach the Disciples About the Postponement of the Kingdom

H. Wayne House

Distinguished Research Professor of Theology, Law, and Culture

Faith International University, Faith Seminary

I. Introduction

A. The Importance of the Topic

A number of years ago, Charles Ryrie provided three issues that are central to a dispensational theology, perspectives, I might add, that have not been successfully altered in regards to various discussions on dispensational and non-dispensational theology, including my topic today. Dispensationalism is different, and I would say correct, because there is a clear distinction between Israel and the Church, there is a consistent literal interpretation of Scripture, and last the focus of the Bible, and our theology, is that the glory of God is the purpose of history. It is the deviation from one or more of these points that provides the difference between traditional dispensationalism and covenant theology, new covenant theology, as well as progressive dispensationalism.

Those who hold to a theology different from historic dispensationalism do give lip service to holding at least points two and three, and even some see some distinction between ethnic Israel and the Church in the plan of God, but at heart there is a failure to uphold these three essential elements of proper biblical and systematic theology.

The Old Testament prophecies taught both roles for Jesus, but the disciples didn't put it all together until later.

The Messianic kingdom in which the Messiah would reign in the manner discussed by the prophets did not occur in His first coming. Either it was postponed (in one way of speaking) or the Messianic kingdom should be understood a spiritual kingdom, other than explained throughout the prophets. If the plan of God is to establish the Messianic Kingdom, and the Jews had embraced Jesus as the Messiah, would He still have needed to die for the sins of humanity and to rise from the dead. If God chose to accomplish His plan for His world, could He genuinely offer the Messianic Kingdom knowing that it would be rejected, in order to provide an interstitial period in which the Church, made up of Jew and Gentile would fulfill His will that was hidden until the passion of Christ, with the Messianic Kingdom to be established at His coming?

II. The Teacher-Student Relationship of Jesus and the Disciples

A. The Manner and Purpose of Jesus' Teaching of the Twelve Disciples

From the time that Jesus called twelve men to follow Him, His classes with His students began. By word and deed, this rabbi from the Galilee, opened up the sacred Scriptures of the Jewish people in a

manner different from other rabbis who also crossed the land Israel during the first century. He taught that the Tanakh did not only give the will of God, and knowledge of the God of Israel, but that the Scriptures spoke directly of Him and the plan of God for the people of Israel, and even of the entire world. The law, the prophets, and the writings spoke of God's kingdom and God's salvation, both of which culminated in the Son of God, who came from the Father, and would soon return back to the Father.

The words of Jesus revealed the intent of the law of God, finding their fulfillment in Him. The prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures pointed to Him as the Messiah promised in the sacred text, but that He was even more than could be imagined. Even the writings set forth His work as the Son who would reign with His Father from the heavens, and would come again to receive His people to be with Him. This was no ordinary rabbi. He was God in the flesh, the Word of God.

His teaching style was similar to other teachers of His day, using statements from the Torah, explaining them and applying them to the disciples. Often examples in life would be used to make a point.

But Jesus was different from the average rabbi. He not only explicated the word of God, He also gave teaching to His disciples that was intentionally hidden from the masses, and revealed to them, secret things that were not obvious in the Hebrew text. This hidden truth was not known to the people in general, or even to the teachers of Israel. According to Matthew 13, in which gave the parables of the kingdom of God, we find that they were mysteries or secrets (Matt 13:11)¹ that had been hidden from the creation of the world (Matt 13:35).¹ It is not that they were difficult sayings in the Hebrew Scriptures, whose meanings were obtuse and not easily interpreted. No, they were truths that were not included in the sacred text, and known only to God until He chose to reveal them with the coming of the Messiah.

What were these secrets about? They concerned the kingdom of God. Now the subject of the kingdom of God was not new to the Jewish people. This theme was spoken of in the biblical text many times, particularly as it related to the kingdom to be established by the coming Messiah, Son of David. A plethora of Old Testament passages spoke of this kingdom to come. But what Jesus speaks about in Matthew 13, and elsewhere, particularly Luke 19:11-29, the subject of the latter portion of this paper, was unknown to people and prophets. Jesus had come to offer the promised Davidic kingdom to the Jewish people. And though there were many Jews who accepted His message and embraced Him as God's Messiah, He was generally rejected by the leaders of Israel, and the people.

In view of this rejection (foretold by the prophets), the plan of God seems to take a different route than anticipated by the disciples and the masses. To God, and even to Jesus, this was not a different direction. The unknown path was known by God from all eternity, but now revealed. The manner of this unveiling is the subject matter of the parables in Matthew 13, and in Luke 19:11-29.

The teaching of Jesus to His disciples became more private and more revealing than was offered to the larger group of disciples and the masses. He had presented Himself to the people of Israel as the Messiah through His wonders and words, but now to the twelve, and finally eleven, He informed them that due to His rejection He was doing something new. Of course, I am speaking of what was new in the revelation that He revealed, and not something new to the plan of God. Instead of going to the throne room in Jerusalem, He was going to the cross. In spite of this seeming defeat, there was to be a victory that

¹ Stuart K. Weber, "Matthew," Vol. 1, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 190.

was unexpected. He would rise from the dead. And this resurrection was not in the manner of Lazarus, who would die again and wait for the resurrection as the end of the age. The resurrection of Jesus would be the first fruits, the pattern, of all resurrections of the righteous foretold by the prophet Daniel, and believed by the faithful of Israel. His resurrection was to be a body energized by the Spirit of God, one that was immortal and incorruptible. Between His resurrection and His future coming, however, He had promised to build His church that would fill a place in history unforeseen even by the prophets. This church would fill the void that Israel had not fulfilled, joining a remnant of Jews and large number of Gentiles to form a body in which the work of the Spirit would flourish, bringing the gospel of the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus to the world. Paul called this a mystery hidden in God. At the end of the age, He would return to the unilateral and unconditional covenant He had made with Abraham, to ensure a land, a royal seed, and bring blessings to the Gentiles. The blessing of the Gentiles continues until the fullness of the Gentiles are saved, after which He returns to Israel to complete His further promises to them, along with a New Covenant that He offers to them of the land of Israel and David's son sitting on His throne from Jerusalem.

One sees in the Bible two lines of development, to restore the kingdom of God from the fall recorded in Genesis, and to redeem sinful humanity from Adam's guilt lost in the garden. The kingdom of God is the rule of God over all of His creation, and according to His good pleasure is restored gradually through many years of His interaction with humanity. The final kingdom is the millennial kingdom that culminates in the final restoration of the new heavens and new earth, in which all of the redeemed shall share.

B. What Happened to the Messianic Kingdom

Jesus came teaching and preaching the coming of the kingdom of God. He was baptized as God's Messiah by John, and declared that the kingdom of God was in their midst. In fact, His words and miraculous deeds served as a testimony that He was indeed the Messiah. But as His ministry moved toward its conclusion, He began to focus on what John had spoken at the Jordan, that He was the lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. This was not something that His disciples readily understood, but they shared with the populace and leadership of Israel, that Messiah lives forever, and Messiah cannot die. They could not come to grips with His talk about dying, even at the end, the night before the crucifixion.

Connected to this movement toward death instead of conquering the Romans and restoring the glory of the Davidic rule, He spoke of His rejection by Israel, and His submission to the way of sorrow, in the footsteps of the Servant of Yahweh, in Isaiah 52:13—53:12.

The question that rises from this quandary was whether the Messiah's kingdom was to take a turn into a spiritual reign after His death and ascension, rather than an earthly, political rule, and totally misunderstood at the time? The Messianic reign was always to be spiritual, and the church is simply the continuation of regenerate Jews of the past.

A further consideration is whether the kingdom of God was to have both heavenly and earthly dimension? Such is the perspective of progressive dispensationalism and New Covenant Theology.

Is there only one kingdom of God, with the future earthly rule of Christ only one form of this kingdom, while the church is a spiritual manifestation of the kingdom of God. There was no postponement, but only an unknown expression of the kingdom. Traditional dispensationalist who do not accept postponement.

On the other hand, was the earthly Messianic rule genuinely offered, but upon its rejection, God changed His plans, so that the kingdom of God would become the head of a new spiritual body, the church, a spiritual kingdom, but after this is completed, he turns back to the original earthly reign, postponed in the first century? Traditional dispensationalism.

In such a short paper, one cannot deal with all of these matters, so I will focus on whether there is a true postponement of the kingdom of God, and if Israel had accepted Jesus as Messiah, He would have established His earthly kingdom. This, however, does not preclude His sacrificial death, as a road to the Davidic throne.

C. Was the Messianic Kingdom Postponed?

A difficulty arises in trying to understand the movement of God's revelation, and that the prophets of the Old Testament foretold the coming of the Messiah who would set up his kingdom on the earth as an heir to the throne of David and establish the Jewish people in their land and initiate a golden age. Rather than this occurring one observes that the Jewish people in general were not responsive to Jesus as their Messiah, especially the Jewish leadership, so that he became a sacrifice for the sins of all humanity rather than assuming the position of a political an earthly leader.

After his death and resurrection, Jesus spent approximately days teaching his disciples regarding the things of the kingdom of God. Then he gathered his disciples together before he ascended back to the Father. One of the major questions that came into the mind of the disciples, then, with what about the promises of the Davidic kingdom. They ask him, according to Luke's recording in Acts 16 "so when they come together they ask him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'

The answer that Jesus gives in the next verse is not a rejection of their question, but an ambiguous answer. His response was, "it is not for you to know times or seasons that the father has fixed by his own authority." (Acts 1:7).² So either He was leading them on as to when the kingdom would be established in Jerusalem as a Davidic rule, or He was simply avoiding their question, since the decision regarding when he would establish this rule was left in the hands of the father, and He had another task at present for them.³ The latter seems to be the preferable understanding.⁴ However, if this is true, then there is a

² See Alford's discussion on Acts 1:6-7. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, Vol II: Acts, Romans, Corinthians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 3-4.

³ This could be argued since on another occasion He had indicated that the timing of His coming was in the Father's authority, and that He didn't even know when He would come.

⁴ Several fine articles deal with this question of postponement, and with whether Jesus is reigning on David's throne in the current era. See John A. McLean, "Did Jesus Correct the Disciples' View of the Kingdom?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (April-June 1994): 215-227; Stephen J. Nichols, "The Dispensational View of the Davidic Kingdom: A Response to Progressive Dispensationalism," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 7/2 (Fall 1996) 213-239; Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., "The Davidic Covenant in Acts-Revelation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (January-March 1994): 71-84; Elliott E. Johnson, "Hermeneutical Principles and the Interpretation of Psalm 110," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149: 596 (1992): 428-437; Mal Couch, "Progressive Dispensationalism: Is Christ Now on the Throne of David?"—Part 1, <http://www.tyndale.edu/dirn/articles/david1.html>; Mal Couch, Progressive Dispensationalism: Is Christ Now on the Throne of David?— Part 2, <http://www.tyndale.edu/dirn/articles/david2.html>; Mal Couch, Progressive Dispensationalism: Is Christ Now on the Throne of David?—Part 3, http://www.conservativeonline.org/journals/2_6_journal/progressive_dispensationalism_3.htm; an interesting article by a progressive dispensationalist argues also that Jesus is not now on David's throne, Tim Warner, Is Jesus

postponement of the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom (at least from a human perspective), and be one that could be anticipated by the disciples and other Jews, and not *merely* the inauguration of a spiritual form of the kingdom to replace the rejected kingdom, as some have argued.

How should we understand all of this? Did Jesus agree with his disciples that the future kingdom would be established in the future by the work of Messiah? It appears that his hearers, his opponents, and his disciples (pre and post resurrection) understood that Jesus would initiate the Messianic kingdom with a rule from Jerusalem, but did Jesus believe this to be so. As Walter Kaiser says, "The issue at stake here was not whether the land would be restored to Israel but only the issue of timing."⁵ We find in the latter ministry of Jesus that He began to reveal to the disciples more clearly that the Messiah must suffer and die, not that He would soon be establishing a political and earthly rule from Jerusalem. If Jesus still intended to become a ruler over Israel, His disciples wanted to know when would it be? If the latter is correct, is the church, then, an afterthought? If the Jewish people had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, would the political and earthly Messianic kingdom, with an attendant one-thousand-year reign, have begun in Israel? Would Jesus have had to still go to the cross for the sins of humanity? Additionally, is the church a valid expression of the purposes of God as a manifestation of the kingdom of God, a spiritual expression, which is one of the ways in which the God's rule would be exercised in the world?

D. A Dispensational Alternative to Postponement of the Kingdom

The theological conundrum becomes that if there is a postponement of the establishment of the Davidic throne upon the earth, how could then there have been a legitimate offering since it was foretold in the prophets, and later taught by the apostles, that the son of God, the Messiah of Israel to be slain for His people. Would not the offering of an earthly kingdom ruled by Messiah have been disingenuous? Would not the offer be an insincere one because Jesus or the Father, knew they would reject it, so why make it? The resolution, I believe, resides in the truth that all of God's offers to humans, including salvation, must be viewed in light of the divine omniscience, but that these are not separated from human responsibility, nor God's mercy and justice.

David Turner explains this legitimate tension about God's plan in regard to His promises and human responsibility:

All of this is somewhat problematic, as some dispensationalists have admitted. However it is only another aspect of the divine sovereignty/human responsibility tension which may be observed elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Matt 26:24; Acts 2:23). The cardinal example of such tension might indeed be the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2–3. *What if* Adam and Eve had not rejected God's plan for them (Gen 2:16–17)? Is this question really all that different from the one which asks *what if* Israel as a nation had accepted the kingdom offer? God knew that Adam and Eve would fall and that Israel would nationally reject the kingdom offer. Yet there was a genuine exercise of human responsibility and a resulting culpability in both cases. Covenant theologians should thus have no problems in principle with the dispensational articulation of the offer of the Kingdom.⁶

Seated on David's Throne , <http://www.pfrs.org/pd/pd13.html>; Andrew M. Woods, *The Coming Kingdom: What Is the Kingdom and How Is Kingdom Now Theology Changing the Focus of the Church?* (Duluth, MN: Grace Gospel Press, 2006), 77-101.

⁵ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Land of Israel and the Future Return (Zechariah 10:6-12)," in *Israel, the Land, and the People*, H. Wayne House, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1988), 223.

⁶ David L. Turner, "The Continuity of Scripture and Eschatology: ^[1]_{SEP}Key Hermeneutical Issues," *GTJ* 6:2 (Fall 85) p. 286.

W. Robert Cook believes that there was no postponement, but rather God intended to God in His kingdom program to , which he calls “an intercalation”:

One of the very real problems with traditional dispensationalism has been its doctrine of a postponed Kingdom. It has been taught that, having offered the kingdom to Israel during his earthly ministry, and having been rebuffed, Jesus “postponed” the Kingdom (temporarily withdrawing the offer) until the future millennium and instead changed his plan, turning away from Israel to the Gentiles. To avoid the charge of a fickle God, caught unawares, the dispensationalist has appealed to the legitimate hermeneutical principle of “prophetic perspective.” This allows them to say that this change was anticipated in God’s plan all along. Thus they can have their theological cake and eat it, too.⁷

Cook is a traditional dispensationalist but believes that the Old Testament does not reveal the way in which the church and the Kingdom that is explained in the New Testament. He acknowledges that there are two advents of the Messiah with little information on what occurs between the two comings of Christ. His concern is that were the offering of the Kingdom prophesied by the prophets truly been accepted by the Jews would this have caused the death of Christ to be unnecessary.²

He believes that part of the problem is that many dispensationalists have difficulty in considering that the Kingdom relates to both Israel and the church. He argues that even though the church and Israel are not the same (as in Reformed and replacement theology), may the two be under the umbrella of a larger sense of the kingdom of God. He believes that the covenants in the Old Testament contain promises to both Israel and the church to extend the Kingdom of God, as well as both share in the gift of salvation secure by Jesus. As well, they share a common destiny of dwelling together in the New Jerusalem.⁸

Certainly, Cook acknowledges that an earthly Kingdom and King was never promised to the church, and that God will be faithful to Israel in fulfilling the various earthly promises to the physical children of Abraham as another way to extend his Kingdom. Even so, this eventually gives way to the eternal kingdom. Those today who are born of the Spirit enter the kingdom, and it may be also said that the Kingdom envisioned for the Jewish people awaits Messiah’s return. But even this kingdom, as is true with the kingdom in which the believer today dwells, eventually melds into the new heavens and new earth.⁹

Traditional dispensationalists often have called the church age a parenthesis in the plan of God’s plan for Israel, but Cook would rather use the term intercalation (“to add to the calendar”), that is a filling in of an undisclosed event in God’s calendar. Consequently, the church age is not an afterthought or postponement, since there is not a “change of plans and nothing is postponed.”¹⁰ He believes that the idea of parenthesis suggests something that occurs that does not have connection between one precedes and what follows, or something that is incidental to God’s plan, or a hasty substitution.¹¹

He believes that the term intercalation provides for the view that the church age is not irrelevant, but is part of the eternal purposes of God planned from all time. It is simply the fact that God chose not to reveal His plans for the church until the first century apostles and the Abrahamic Covenant, in the words “in you all the families of the earth shall be bless” (Gen 12:3), which allows for the church in a very general

⁷ W. Robert Cook, *Systematic Theology in Outline Form* (Silverton: Lampion Press, TBA).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

sense.¹²

He sees several biblical texts that support his contention of intercalation:

Daniel 9:24-27

This is a prophecy concerning Israel ('your people'—v. 24) involving seventy weeks of years, i.e., 490 years. The period began in 445 B.C. with the first sixty-nine weeks (483 years) being fulfilled literally unto Messiah and his cutting off. The seventieth week has not yet been fulfilled; consequently, there is an interval of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of indeterminate length which is the church age. (For further discussion see Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*; H. A. Ironside, *The Great Parenthesis*; Alva J. McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*.)

Isaiah 61:1-2, cf., Luke 4:16-21.

In his reading of the scripture in the synagogue in Nazareth the Lord stopped abruptly in the middle of the passage just before the words 'the day of vengeance of our God.' In so doing he tacitly recognized a distinction between that yet future event and 'the favorable year of the Lord' which he indicates is being fulfilled in their hearing (Luke 4:21). This allows for the events which would transpire between the two advents of Christ.

Psalms 22:1-31

Verses 1-21 of this psalm describe the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Verse 22 describes the resurrection. Verses 23-31 refer to the coming kingdom and deliverance of Israel. While not alluded to there is allowance for the present age.

Psalms 34:12-16, cf., 1 Peter 3:10-12

In quoting this portion of the psalm Peter stops before the words 'to cut off the memory. . .' so as to distinguish between God's present and future dealings with sin.

Hosea 3:4-5

There is an obvious historical gap between verses four and five. 'Afterward' points to an indefinite time period during which Israel will wander among the nations of the earth before returning to the Lord.

Leviticus 23

An analysis of Israel's festal year reveals a most interesting phenomenon. There are two sets of feasts, one in the spring and one in the fall, with a marked break between them."¹³

Michael J. Vlach offers another example, that of king Saul:

. . . God promised king Saul a permanent kingdom over Israel, but this did not occur since Saul disobeyed God (see 1 Sam 13:13-14). But how can this be? Wasn't it God's plan that David be the one through whom the eternal dynasty over Israel occurred? The answer is, Yes. From our standpoint we know that God decreed David, not Saul, as the vehicle for the eternal dynasty. But that does not make God's offer to Saul any less genuine.

So what if Israel had believed in Jesus as Messiah at His first coming? More on this will be said in our section on Acts 3:19-21. But in one sense, we don't really have to answer that question. It is a hypothetical scenario. All we need to know is that Israel was offered real kingdom blessings if they believed in Jesus, yet in God's sovereign plan this was not going to occur at this time. That generation of Israel will be held accountable for their unbelief (see Matt 11:20-24).

To conclude, the death of Jesus on the cross had to occur because it is absolutely necessary for salvation and because the OT predicted it. Yet this truth coincides with a genuine presentation of the kingdom to Israel.¹⁴

Turner, Cook, and Vlach are not alone. George Peters, Charles Ryrie, and Lewis Sperry Chafer hold to

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God* (Silverton, OR: Lampion Press, 2016), 366.

the same perspective,¹⁵ that is, that there was some form of postponement as humans might view it, but from God's perspective there is merely an intercalation.

We may rightly conclude that God did offer the Messianic kingdom to the Jews at the first coming of Christ, and *if* they had embraced Him, they would have entered the kingdom as prophesied by the prophets in the Old Testament. The acceptance or rejection of the offered kingdom relates to the kingdom program directed by God in the world, but the death of Christ on the cross for the sins of humanity concerns human redemption, with Jews and Gentiles alike, required to embrace by faith the death of Christ, so even though I am not sure how this would have worked out in the first coming of Christ, it is surely true that He still would have had to die. Were this the scenario, if the Jews had accepted Jesus as their King, He could have been put to death by the Romans, then raised from the dead, and afterwards establish His kingdom at that time, when the Romans ruled, as easily as He will when He returns to do this in the future. Of course, the way this occurs, as Jesus told His disciples, is under the Father's authority and timing.

What must be avoided is that the church or a spiritual kingdom is a replacement or substitution for the earthly and political Messianic Kingdom prophesied by the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, taught by Jesus and anticipated by the apostles.¹⁶

E. Why Do Contemporary Non-dispensationalists have Difficulty with Understanding an Intercalation or Postponement of the Messianic Kingdom on the Earth?

1. *They don't accept that the church is a hidden or mystery form of God's rule in the earth.*
2. *They wrongly believe that the apostles find a meaning that is different from what is the literal sense understood from a study of the meaning of the prophetic texts in their contexts.*
3. *They consider the spiritual salvation of humanity to be the sole, or major, focus of the coming of the Messiah, rather than being one of the two ways that God brings glory to Himself in the Messianic work of Jesus.*
4. *They consider that since the Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah, the unconditional and unilateral covenants of the Old Testament have been set aside in a literal*

¹⁵

¹⁶ Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 190–191: "Of course, the concept of kingdom "postponement" until a second coming only describes what it looks like from the human perspective. The kingdom is not postponed at all, but advances in a different form—the church. There is no delay in the advance of God's purpose. Everything simply had not been revealed in the Old Testament. Human responsibility for the rejection of the Messiah-King and the "apparent postponement" of the kingdom stands, but in God's sovereign all-knowing plan, there are no surprises. The death and resurrection of Christ are essential elements of the redemptive plan.

The Old Testament has revealed the earthly reign of Christ on the throne of David. But Matthew 13 introduces a different form of the kingdom—the spiritual reign of the king over his own servants while he is physically absent before his second coming. That is the secret—how his kingdom program will unfold in the period between his two advents. That is the subject of Matthew 13."

sense, as distinguished from the conditional and bilateral covenant of Moses, and have now taken on a spiritual sense through the church.

5. *They believe that the prophetic portions of Scripture may be understood allegorically (spiritually) since they view the literal promises to Israel of a Messianic kingdom that was to be earthly, physical and political in nature.*
6. *They believe that should the promises of God have been fulfilled in a literal manner, that this would have precluded the works of salvation for humanity's salvation through the cross and resurrection of Jesus.*
7. *They believe that the church of today is simply the continuation of the believers of the Old Testament rather than a new group of people different in God's intentions in the working out of His kingdom and made up of Jews and Gentiles. For them, the church is Israel and Israel is the church.*
8. *They believe that dispensationalists do not see Jesus as the focus of the Bible since (the argument goes) they are concerned with eschatological events rather than Jesus Himself.¹⁷*
9. *They believe that the promises of God to the Jewish people that are of a physical nature are set aside for nonphysical, spiritual blessings, which supposedly were ultimately the meaning of God in the Abrahamic Covenant.*

II. What Did Jesus Teach His Disciples about the Kingdom of God

A. He was the Messiah, Son of David, Who was to Rule the Kingdom of God

1. *He was David's son to Rule on David's Throne*
2. *He was the Son of Man of Daniel 7*
3. *He was the Savior of His People (Isa 52:13-53:12??)*

B. The Messianic Kingdom was the Rule of God in the Earth

1. *The Kingdom was an Earthly Kingdom*

Why did the people and disciples understand the earthly nature of the kingdom, and if that is so, why did Jesus or John never explain that they meant something totally different.

Closely connected with God's kingdom program is the first coming of the Messiah. Both John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2) and Jesus (Mat. 4:17) came proclaiming that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Neither John nor Jesus, nor the particular gospel writers recording these events, tried to define the nature of this kingdom, obviously expecting the audience to understand what they meant by that term; and well they might since Jewish audiences had common knowledge of the Old Testament and understood the nature of the Messianic Kingdom. Even Covenant Theologians of all stripes admit that the common Jewish understanding of the kingdom in first century Israel was that of a literal earthly kingdom centered in Jerusalem and ruled by the Messiah. The obvious origin of such a view was the literal understanding of the Old Testament prophets. If either John or Jesus meant something totally different, which all Covenant Theologians insist on, including

¹⁷ Now were the events of the future unrelated to the words and works of Christ in the future, this could be argued, but future events of the rapture, tribulation, second coming, and millennium are not separate from Jesus being involved in each of these acts of God, even as He was involved in the historical events of His birth, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

Covenant Premillennialists, then why did neither one explain such a distinction from the beginning? The very fact that they did not shows that the common Jewish understanding of the coming kingdom was a correct one.¹⁸

2. *The Kingdom was being Inaugurated by the coming of the Messiah*
3. *The Messianic Kingdom Began with the Acceptance of the Messiah by Israel*

C. The Messiah was to be Rejected by the Leaders and People of Israel

1. *The Parables of the Hidden Kingdom*
2. *Israel's Rejection by the Leaders and People of Israel*
3. *Messiah Would Return again in Power and Glory*

D. The Postponement of the Messianic Kingdom

1. *The Kingdom Unknown to the Prophets*

Weber says,

Anticipating Christ's coming death, resurrection, and ascension, Matthew 13 deals with the question, "What will happen to the kingdom when the rejected king goes back to heaven without having actually ruled over the earth?" To answer the question, Jesus used a somewhat unusual word in the Bible. He spoke of secrets (13:11) and indicated he was revealing to his disciples truths hidden since the creation of the world (13:35). In the Bible, a mystery or secret is not something hard to understand, as we commonly use the word. Rather, it refers to a truth that was never revealed in the Old Testament but now is made plain in the New Testament. The apostle Paul defined it as truth "that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints" (Col. 1:26).¹⁹

2. *The Kingdom was Legitimately Offered even though God knew it would be rejected.*

Chafer reveals the inconsistency of the Reformed view against the legitimate offer of the Kingdom:

In an earlier work, Chafer defends the dispensational view of the kingdom which Christ offered to Israel.¹ Dispensationalism strongly affirms that the kingdom Jesus offered and proclaimed as being *at hand* was the same one described by the Old Testament prophets and for that reason Jesus, or John the Baptist before Him, never needed to explain what they meant when they spoke of the kingdom. The kingdom offer was made with the full knowledge that it would be rejected and, therefore, rescinded or, as some prefer, "postponed." It is this very issue that Covenant Theology harshly criticizes. Chafer quotes Allis, a covenant amillennial critic dealt with earlier who characterized this dispensational view as "impossible" and even more serious as minimizing "the value and centrality of the cross." Allis and other Covenant Theologians claim that the value of the cross is minimized if the kingdom was offered before the death of Christ. Chafer finds such criticism, coming from Calvinists, as being rather odd and inconsistent on their part because this whole issue is only another example of the "conflict between divine sovereignty and human will." Chafer provides some other examples in which a predicted event, which made it sure, was still offered as a choice. One such example has to do with the fall of Adam. If is a teaching of Scripture "that Jehovah's Lamb was in the redeeming purpose slain from the foundation of the world." It was decreed in the plan of God that the Messiah would die for human sin even before Adam was created. So when Adam was created, it was certain that he would sin and that his sin would be an act of his own free will. Yet, Adam was commanded not to sin. Chafer asks, "What would have become of the redemptive purpose had Adam obeyed God?" A Calvinists answers that because of the decree of God, although Adam was commanded not to sin, there was no question

¹⁸ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 614–616.

¹⁹ Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 190–191.

that he would. The offer of eternal life to Adam for not sinning did not “minimize” the redemptive program of God. By the same token, when the kingdom was offered to Israel, it was already known that the offer would be rejected. This offer, however, did not minimize the cross since the rejection of the offer was clearly anticipated. “The precross offer of the earthly Messianic Kingdom to Israel by her Messiah ... was also made sure by *prediction*.” It was “equally made sure by prediction that Christ would be crucified which was Israel’s official rejection of their King.” In the same way, other things were made sure such as resurrection, ascension, the present session at the right hand of God the Father, and His future reign “on David’s earthly throne and ... over the house of Jacob forever.” Chafer concludes that it was predicted that Israel would reject her Messiah and this rejection could not possibly be “the personal rejection of a crucified and risen Savior” since these events had not yet happened when He was rejected. Jesus came to Israel as a nation and offered Himself to them as the “Messiah King” and it is this that Israel rejected.²⁰

In addition, Fruchtenbaum quotes Charles Feinberg similarly to show the lack of proper argument to support Reformed thinking in this area:

Charles Lee Feinberg notes that Covenant Theologians seem to be exasperated over the dispensational teaching of a “postponed kingdom,” and previous chapters of this work bear out his observation. However, Feinberg points out that the concept of “postponement” is purely from the human perspective, for Scripture views events from the divine perspective as well as the human standpoint. So, as far as God is concerned, who knows the end from the beginning, nothing is postponed. Dispensationalists are amazed that this should bother Covenant Theologians who are all Calvinists. After all, they believe that God decreed the death of the Messiah before He ever created Adam, and yet still subjected Adam and Eve under a test of obedience in the Garden of Eden. Though Adam’s failure was certain, Calvinists still believe the test was *bona fide*. He still commanded Adam to obey, knowing Adam would not obey, having already planned the death of a Saviour. By the same token, the offer of the kingdom can be a *bona fide* offer, although it was known that Israel would reject it and that the Church was already in the plan of God. Covenant Theologians are inconsistent with their own Calvinism when they object to the concept of “postponement” in the way they do.²¹

3. *Is the “Mystery” Form of the Kingdom of God a Parenthesis, Intercalation, or a Postponement (Ryrie, Cook, Fruchtenbaum, Chafer)*
4. *How Does the Mystery form of the Kingdom Differ from the Messianic Kingdom*
5. *What Does Jesus Do During the Current Period Before the Earthly and Davidic Kingdom*
 - a. Sits in the Father’s Throne in Anticipation of Coming on the Clouds of Heaven to Rule Physically in the Earth from Jerusalem
 - b. Is an advocate before the Father, fulfilling His priestly role as the Melchizedekian Priest and King

E. The Parable of the Minas (Pounds) Luke 19:11-29

The Parable of the Minas represents a different kind of parable than the ones given in Matthew 13. Generally parables should not be interpreted in bits and piece, but are to be interpreted as one main idea. This parable poses a problem in this regard, since it appears to be a response to the belief in an immediate

²⁰ Charles Lee Feinberg, *Premillennialism or Amillennialism?* (New York: American Board of Missions to the Jews, 1961), pp. 152–161. Quoted from Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 385–386.

coming of the Kingdom ruled by the Son of David, the Messiah.

Few would question that this is one of the more difficult parables of Jesus, providing an insight into the interim between the passion and resurrection of Jesus and His return in the future. There are two variations of this Lucan account, one in Matthew 25:14-30 and a brief parabolic-like saying in Mark 13:34-35.

1. *The Setting of the Parable*

a. The journey through Jericho and Bethany (Luke 19:1-10)

Is there any significance of Jesus traveling through Jericho and Bethany for the purpose of providing a setting for the parable of the Minas? There are those who believe that the story of Jesus and Zaccheus may have been developed by Luke based on a story of Herod the Great and his son Archelaus. For example, Steven Cole says,

There was a commonly known historical parallel to this story. Both Herod the Great and his son Archelaus had journeyed to Rome to receive the kingdom of Judea from Caesar. In the case of Archelaus, the people of Judea hated him and sent a delegation after him to Rome to tell Caesar that they did not want this man to rule over them. Augustus compromised by allowing Archelaus to rule, but only with the title ethnarch, on the premise that he would have to earn the title king, which he never did. Archelaus had built a beautiful palace for himself in Jericho, where Jesus was speaking. Jericho was about a six-hour walk, 18 miles, from Jerusalem.²²

In Jericho, the single incident of bringing salvation to the tax-collector Zaccheus is recorded and sets the stage for the future teaching on the distinction between the earthly Davidic-Messianic Kingdom, and the inner and spiritual rule of God that Jesus would present shortly. In this story we see a despised Jewish chief tax-collector who accepted Jesus into his home and into his life. The text indicates that the people were astonished that Jesus would dine with such a man, not too different from the Pharisees who had similar revulsion elsewhere (). The text does not provide much about their conversation, but it certainly made a major difference in the life of Zaccheus in that he volunteered to make restitution of anything that

²² Steven J. Cole, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-88-doing-business-jesus-luke-1911-27>. Copyright, Steven J. Cole, 2000, All Rights Reserved; François Bovon says about this possible basis of the parable: “Did a historical episode, Archelaus’s coming to power, recounted by Josephus, serve as a model for the parable of the pretender to the royal office? In fact, the prince’s fate bears only an imperfect resemblance to Archelaus’s and to Herod the Great’s before him. Like Busse, I prefer to appeal to the contemporary political system, especially to the period of principate, the patron–client structure that required local petty kings to seek the support and even the approval of the central authority—in this particular case, Rome. We should not, however, confuse Rome and heaven, Italy and the kingdom of God! The author of L, to whom I attribute these political developments in the economic story of the minas, is following an allegorizing instinct; the noble prince, who is about to leave, is none other than Jesus, whose ascension will indicate his becoming king.” *FranLuke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, Hermeneia 63B; ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Donald S. Deer; Accordance electronic ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 600; *See also* John Nolland, *Gospel of Luke*, Word Biblical Commentary: “The action here is a natural part of the consolidation of power of the newly instated monarch. This sort of behavior had been part of Archelaus’ strategy on gaining possession of his ethnarchy (Josephus, *War* 2.111) and was a notable feature of Herod the Great’s accession to power (*War* 1.351–58). It also has its counterpart in OT victory scenes (1 Sam 15:33).” *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, Hermeneia 63B; ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Donald S. Deer; Accordance electronic ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 600.

he had wrongly done, even in abundance. The response of Jesus is plain, when he says that salvation had come to his house. What is special to note is that Jesus identified Zaccheus as a son of Abraham, one who ethnically would be included in an earthly kingdom, but now became a participant in a spiritual one.

As François Bovon says,

Luke had another conception of Israel's identity; in his eyes, the historical Jewish people remained Abraham's descendants. But this people had to show itself worthy of its status; if not, it would lose that privilege. What Jesus had to do, in the case of these "lost" sheep of Israel, was to find them, reestablish them, "save" them, and thus permit them to fulfill the obligations associated with their Jewish identity. That is what is going on here with Zacchaeus, who, both welcoming and welcomed, bore the fruit of repentance, that is, showed by what he did that he had repented. In this way, the Gospel writer confirmed what he had John the Baptist say: "Bear fruits worthy of repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (3:8).²³

Another factor to consider regarding the Zacchaeus is the Lucan theological theme of "losing" and "finding again" that is found several times in Luke 15.²⁴ We see Jesus exclaiming upon Zacchaeus' declaration of faith with works (a la James), "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and save²⁵ that which was lost."

b. The Recipients of the Parable

There is a lack of clarity as to the recipients of Luke 19:11, since the disciples are not specifically mentioned, and the nearest antecedent would be the city crowd in v. 7. Two groups of people in the Jericho event. The residents of Jericho grumbled about Jesus eating with Zaccheus, probably because the short man had sought to assert himself over the people, and known received special favor of the rabbi. The response of Zaccheus to the offer of Jesus signified a change of heart, since Jesus indicated that salvation had come to him. In some way, this interaction between the tax collector and Jesus gave rise to the expectation that follows from the disciples, or someone else.

Since it is unlikely that the city inhabitants who decried Zacchaeus were also at the house, and that Jesus continued with the disciples to Jerusalem in v. 11, it seems likely that the parable, as in Matt 13, was only with the disciples and was a story meant for his intimate followers.

²³ *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27, Hermeneia* 63B; ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Donald S. Deer; Accordance electronic ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 600.

²⁴ Bovon comments that this is a christological affirmation seen at different times in Luke's Gospel. "Verse 10 picks up on a christological affirmation already encountered in the Third Gospel: "I am here to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (5:32). If it could be said that the story about Zacchaeus represents the essence of the entire Gospel, then that characterization can be applied even more aptly to the single v. 10. The vocabulary of "losing" and "finding again" is basic to the theological thought of Luke and dominates chap. 15, which is so central (see esp. vv. 24 and 32). The function attributed here to the Son of Man corresponds to the one that God, the shepherd of Israel, assumes by identifying with David, his servant in the prophecy in Ezekiel (see Ezek 34:15–16, 23–24). It was perhaps not just coincidental that the title "Son of David" appeared in the pericope about the blind man who was healed (18:35–43), the section that immediately precedes the one about Zacchaeus." François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27, Hermeneia* 63B; ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Donald S. Deer; Accordance electronic ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 600.

²⁵ The word "σωζω" is use of spiritual deleverage, of forgiveness, rather than its usage of deliverance from theological error in 1 Tim 4:16, or physical deliverance from God's wrath in the tribulation in 1 Thess 1:10, delivered from drowning or destruction in 1 Pet 3:20.

“While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they (δοκεῖν αὐτοὺς v. 11, the people of Jericho or disciples, or both) supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.” (Luke 19:11 NAS95). This could refer to the people in v 7 who questioned and murmured regarding Zaccheus or it could refer to the disciples, who are mentioned after the words of Jesus regarding Zaccheus’ salvation to a son of Abraham (v 10). Another possibility is a proleptic usage, in which those who would welcome Jesus were anticipating the immediate coming of the kingdom with the coming of the Son of David, and knowing this He is preparing for the heightened sense of the coming kingdom because of the triumphal entry. Whoever was anticipated the kingdom, Jesus sought to explain that the anticipated kingdom would not immediately appear.

c. The Occasion of the Parable

The parable of the minas (pounds) follows immediately after the Lucan observation that while the disciples were listening to the statement of Jesus’ statement about the salvation of Zacchaeus, son of Abraham. It is probable that this sense of the immediacy of the kingdom (“going to appear immediately”). The term ἀναφαίνεσθαι is charged with meaning in the New Testament, and occurs in reference to the Messiah’s second coming as a compound verb παραχρῆμα spoke of a sudden emergence.

Consequently, it seems, as they approached Jerusalem,²⁶ through Bethany and Bethphage²⁷ near the Mount of Olives, it felt compelled to give a parable²⁸ that would counteract the anticipation of the immediate coming of the Messianic Kingdom. The text indicates that people were anticipating the kingdom to be soon appear (the Greek is ἀναφαίνω, meaning “to cause to appear”), seemingly upon His entrance into Jerusalem, less than 20 miles away.

d. The Telling of the Parable of the Minas

“12 So He said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and *then* return. 13 “And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, ‘Do business *with this* until I come *back*.’ 14 “But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ 15 “When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. 16 “The first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’ 17 “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’ 18 “The second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’ 19 “And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ 20 “Another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.’ 22 “He *said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? 23 ‘Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’ 24 “Then he said to the bystanders, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ 25 “And they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas *already*.’ 26 “I tell you that to everyone

²⁶ Todd Bowman indicated that in one group hike it took about 8 hours to go the 15 miles to Jerusalem from Jericho (with some resting), and climbed an elevation of 3400 feet. Nov 30, 2006, <https://blog.bibleplaces.com/2006/11/jericho-to-jerusalem.html>.

²⁷ From Bethany to the crest of the Mount of Olives is approximately 1^{1/2} miles.

²⁸ This parable occurs only in the Gospel according to Luke in regards to a probable “postponement” idea, though it has similarities with Matthew 13, as well as Matthew 25:14-30 and a brief parabolic-like saying in Mark 13:34-35.

who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 27 “But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.”” (Luke 19:12–27 NAS95)

The parable represents several components of meaning. Since parables should not generally be interpreted in bits and pieces, but are to be interpreted as one main idea, this parable poses a problem. It appears to be a response to the belief in an immediate coming of the Kingdom ruled by the Son of David, the Messiah.

Whereas the norm is for parables to be true to life in order to teach a lesson, but they have no specific elements. This one is different. It becomes obvious about the players and events. First, the nobleman (representing Jesus) would leave to a distant country (heaven), and subsequently return (second coming). Various slaves (citizens of the kingdom) are called to the master before he left and given specific currency to carry on the master’s affairs while he would be gone. Then the parable goes immediately to the return of the master, who asks for an accounting of their work. Two of the slaves produced additionally money for the master, but the third slave was unprofitable, earning nothing.

Jesus immediately applies the parable to situation in which He departs and will return again for a reckoning of the citizens of His kingdom, saying that those servants of his who have will receive more and those who does not have, will have all taken away that they have. But then the tenor of the parable changes, because those who do not want Him to reign over them are called enemies,²⁹ and they are to be put to death.

Should this be applied to citizens of the spiritual kingdom of God, as is done by George Ladd, or does the parable refer to the Jews who have been offered the Kingdom promised in the Hebrew Scriptures, who fail to accept the reign of their master (king)?

e. The Lessons and Arguments of the Parable

(1) The disciples were not to be focused on the expectation of the kingdom of God to the detriment of using their gifts faithfully in the absence of their absent master. The coming kingdom would need to wait until the king returned. That this is true is clear from the subsequent event in which they inquired about the timing of the kingdom of God’s restoration in Acts 1:6. Jesus, on that occasion, did not rebuke them or ignore them in His response. He simply informed them to be busy about the commission from Him to wait for the coming of the Spirit, and leave the restoration of the kingdom that did not arrive, in the Father’s own timing.

(2) Is Jesus offering the kingdom of salvation, the rule of God in the heart, as Ladd believes. He says, “Jesus did not offer to the Jews the

²⁹ Bavon notes that “Eusebius of Caesarea (Comm. Luc. 19.11–27) understood the Lukan rereading of the parabolic story very well and appreciated it; for him, as for the Gospel writer, the story deals with the coming kingdom of God; the master who was a nobleman off on a trip stands for Christ raised to be on the right hand of the Father; the deposit, the proclamation of the kingdom, the baptismal message of faith; and the enemies, as it unfortunately had to be expected, the Jewish people. François Bovon, Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27, Hermeneia 63B; ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Donald S. Deer; Accordance electronic ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 617.

earthly kingdom *any more than he offered himself to them as their glorious, earthly King.*"³⁰ Instead, Jesus offered the intangible spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one, was given to the church.³¹

Part of Ladd's reason for rejecting the idea that Jesus had offered the Messianic and earthly kingdom to Israel is found in his book *The Presence of the Future*, 218,

The central thesis of this book is that the Kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among men, and that this Kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign. The Kingdom of God involves two great moments: fulfillment within history, and consummation at the end of history.³²

Fruchtenbaum responds to Ladd's view of the offering only of a spiritual kingdom:

What Ladd does not explain is, if Christ only offered an intangible spiritual kingdom which was God's reign in the heart, how could such a thing be "taken away" from Israel and given to the Church? Such a spiritual reign of God in the heart of the believer was always true, even before Christ came, so what was so new about Christ's offer? Furthermore, it was always a minority of those in Israel who believed and so had the rule of God in their hearts. If the spiritual kingdom was "taken away," it presupposes that it was Israel's in the first place. Otherwise, it could not be taken away; but while it was Israel's, only a minority in Israel actually experienced it. Was it this kind of a kingdom that Israel rejected? Many did believe and it was a minority again, but it was a very sizable minority. Since many did believe, why was it "taken away" from Israel and given to the Church? After all, there is still a Remnant of Israel (Rom. 11:10).³³

Ladd, then, is in faithful step with Reformed theology in which redemption alone is the manner in which God receives ultimate glory rather than the two-pronged understanding of dispensationalists, namely, to assume again ruler of the earth (lost by Adam) and redemption of fallen humanity (lost in Adam). Both themes flow through the Bible, but myopic covenant theology sees only one, redemption, and everything through this one lens

- f. The aftermath of the Parable
 - (1) The Triumphal Entry
 - (2) The Weeping over Jerusalem
 - (3) The Cleanings of the Temple

III. What Did the Disciples Understand Regarding the Kingdom of God?

A. The Disciples were slow learners

1. *Misunderstood His divine nature (stilling of storm, healing, forgiving sin, walking on water)*
2. *Misunderstood His Intention to Die on Cross and Raise from the Dead (surprised at his death, surprised at his resurrection)*

³⁰ p. 138.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

³² Ladd, *Presence of the Future*, p. 218.

³³ Fruchtenbaum,

3. *Misunderstood His Parables about Mystery Form of the Kingdom (Matthew 13; Luke 19)*
4. *Misunderstood their mission (went back to fishing)*
5. *Misunderstood His Intent Regarding Establishing the David Kingdom (Acts 1:6-7)*

B. After the coming of the Holy Spirit the Understanding Became More Clear

1. *Peter's sermon in Acts 2*
2. *Peter's sermon in Acts 3*
3. *James' statements in Acts 15*

IV. Conclusion

The study of the biblical evidence in the gospels demonstrates that the people of Israel and the disciples embraced the idea of an earthly reign of the Messiah, Son of David over the Jewish people. During Jesus' earthly life He taught this idea, and never deviated from this, but the additional task of Jesus to accomplish His Father's plan was to give Himself for the sins of humanity. Since the Jewish people chose to refuse His offer to be their Messiah, He continued with His redemptive acts and inserted an unknown intention of God to join Jews and Gentiles into one body in Christ, and to complete the promises to the Jewish for a physical kingdom under the Son of David, Jesus the Messiah, at His second coming.