

ESCHATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

PART 14

PREMILLENNIALISM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD, PART 3

God's program for history has always been mediatorial in nature. That is, He leads through His representatives. "The Mediatorial Kingdom may be defined tentatively as: (a) the rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God; (b) a rule which has especial reference to the earth; and (c) having as its mediatorial ruler one who is always a member of the human race." [Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, p. 41]. In terms of Eschatology, we are particularly concerned with people and a Kingdom on planet earth. These mediators fall into the categories of prophet, priest, and king (or ruler), but the complete manifestation of mediatorial leadership will be found in Christ Jesus when He is ruling during the Millennial Kingdom. He is Prophet, Priest, and King.

We will examine the history of the concept of mediatorial rule and we will discover that the future Kingdom will be a reinstatement of the throne of David. This ruler to come will be none other than Christ Jesus, "the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt. 1:1).

The first mediatorial ruler appointed by God to serve in His stead was Adam.

Genesis 1:26 ²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule [רָדוּ] over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

The word רָדוּ means to rule over, dominate, direct, lead, control, and subdue; it means to manage or govern an entity, people, or government with considerable or forceful authority. Adam, mankind, was to rule as God's human ruler on planet earth. The same word was used in Psalm 110:2 when Messiah was granted the right to rule.

Psalm 110:1–2 ¹The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." ²The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule [רָדוּ] in the midst of Your enemies."

David wrote a Messianic Psalm expressing his wonder at the greatness of our Creator God. He praises God for making man, the ultimate Son of Man, His viceregent on earth.

Psalm 8:3-8 ³When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; ⁴What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? ⁵Yet You have made him a little lower than God,

And You crown him with glory and majesty! ⁶You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, ⁷All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, ⁸The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

Where Adam failed, the God-man will succeed. If there is no literal Kingdom on earth, then God's command to mankind will never be accomplished. Some theologians understand this Psalm to be extolling man's current role in the world but this cannot be. Mankind forfeited his rulership prerogatives when he rebelled against God and only when Christ assumes His throne will the dominion mandate be realized and fully restored. Some facets of the dominion mandate may well still be operative, but they are at least greatly diminished, if not fully destroyed, in comparison to what they were commanded to be. Mankind is certainly not ruling in God's stead as He was created to do. Once the Kingdom begins, the segment of mankind that is in Christ will then rule and reign with Him.

"The psalmist understood that this song would be fulfilled directly by the Messiah. 'The Son of Man' is a direct link to the 'Son' of Ps. 2:7, 12, and appears to be associated with the 'Son of Man' in Dn. 7:10-14. As a royal figure, He is crowned with 'glory and majesty,' and rules over all creation. As a human being, He is 'a little lower than God,' not in His essence but in His human attributes. As the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus fulfills humanity's ideal (all that humanity was meant to be and do) and directly fulfills this Psalm." [Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 766].

"The important point in this history of beginnings, however, is that man's original dominion, being wholly derived and mediatorial in character, was to be exercised under the direction of God. It was just here that the first Adam dismally failed. Setting aside the ultimate sovereignty of his Creator, and arrogating to himself the perilous authority to decide what was good for him and his posterity, Adam lost his immediate contact with God, invalidated his mediatorial position, and brought down a whole train of disasters upon the realm where he might have brought unmeasured blessing. This failure of the first Adam, with reference to his mediatorial dominion, introduced into the stream of human history a hiatus which to the present hour has not at any time been wholly remedied." [Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, p. 42].

We know this situation has not been completely rectified to this point in history because "now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him" (Heb. 2:8). That is yet to come.

This may be an overly simplistic statement on my part, but Paul said Adam "is a type of Him who was to come" meaning Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:14). If Adam's mandate to rule is a type of Christ's rule and Adam's rule was to be over planet earth, then isn't it consistent with biblical truth to believe there must be a literal Kingdom on earth over which Christ is going to rule as the antitype, or fulfillment, of Adam's type? Certainly, this pericope

(Romans 5) has to do with the fallen race in Adam which will be restored in Christ. "Adam and Christ are indeed of the same type and this idea is conveyed in traditional theology as the two Headships. Adam is the 'head' of the fallen race of men since their fallenness is derived from his sin. By contrast, Christ is the "Head" of the redeemed race since He is the source of their redemption." [Zane C. Hodges, *Romans: Deliverance From Wrath*, p. 150]. The concept of Headship is also inherently contained within the definition of a rulership position; therefore, it seems to be consistent with what Paul was writing to include ruling at least as part of the type/antitype paradigm between Adam and Christ. The first Adam failed to be the ruler he was designated to be but the Second Adam will fulfill that rulership responsibility.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses were the men God used as the foundation for building a theocratic mediatorial kingdom which we know as the nation of Israel. This kingdom began with Moses and passed to Joshua, the Judges, and the kings. It then declined and ended when God's presence departed from the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek. 10:1-22).

Moses was declared to be a type of Christ. Like Moses, Christ will be ruler over the people of the Kingdom and His power will be absolute.

Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19 ¹⁵"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ... ¹⁸I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

To "require it of him" is to have him killed for not listening to the words of Moses. This is what happened to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram when they rebelled against Moses (Num. 16:1-40). Peter also cited these Scriptures in his second sermon to the Israelites to say to them that all who refuse to give heed to the Christ will be destroyed.

Acts 3:22-23 ²²"Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. ²³'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

We previously discussed the matter of unbelief in the Millennial Kingdom when those who refuse to listen to the King, that is, refuse to believe in Him, will be put out of the Kingdom through death.

The theocratic kingdom of Israel was governed by the Mosaic Law which was a complete entity in and of itself including ceremonial or religious rules, moral commandments, and civil regulations. This system is indivisible. Those theologians today who try to keep the Law as a rule of faith in the age of grace often cut out the religious

rules because they are incompatible with grace based Christianity, but that is not possible. That is what theonomy does, but if one Law is kept, all must be kept; it is indivisible. Some things may be reiterated in the New Testament as the Law of Christ, but that is a grace orientation and not a Law orientation. This is important because the prophet Ezekiel tells us the Millennial Kingdom is going to have Law aspects to it and most theologians object to that doctrine.

The question does arise that asks, "If some of the Law, for example, nine of the Ten Commandments, are continued in the New Testament, then how can we say the Mosaic Law is completely done away?" The Mosaic Law was composed of many individual commands and all were done away with the death of Christ. It has been replaced by the Law of Christ which is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9:21 and Galatians 6:2. The Law of Christ has new commandments and it has some commandments that have been carried over from the Mosaic Law. Some of them are the same and some of them have been modified or revised in some way. Because the Mosaic Law code has been abolished, all the individual components of it have been abolished as well but that doesn't prohibit them from being reissued in a new dispensation. The result is a law that was part of the Mosaic Law is abolished but that same law reinstated as the Law of Christ is mandatory.

If there has always been law and always been grace in one form or another, how do they differ? Specifically concerning the Mosaic Law, it must be remembered that it began with Moses and ended with Christ's death. The Law of Christ began with the death of Christ. The Mosaic Law was only applicable to the Jewish people and those who became Jewish proselytes; grace is the avenue of justification salvation for all people. The Law required that it be met in order to receive God's blessings; in other words, do and then receive the blessing. According to grace, the order is you are accepted by God and therefore blessed so go and do. The Law did not enable obedience; grace via the filling of the Holy Spirit does enable one to walk by the Spirit. The purpose of the Law was to prove to man that he had no merit before God, to reveal to man his sinful condition, and to reveal that his own effort was insufficient to merit any standing before God. The Law was just and holy but it could not make a man just and holy. Christ died that His grace might be extended to all mankind and those who believe have His righteousness imputed and therefore receive justification salvation. The Law of Moses was a ministry of death because the letter kills and condemns; grace is a ministry of life, of the Spirit, and of righteousness [see Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, pp. 476-494. He interacts with Chafer's *Systematic Theology*, Ryrie's *Basic Theology* and *Premillennial Faith*, and Charles Feinberg's *Premillennialism or Amillennialism?*].

Perhaps it would be helpful to think of law this way. In the dispensation of law, the operative law code was the Mosaic Law. In the dispensation of grace, the law of Christ is the standard. In the Millennial Kingdom, Kingdom Law will be the law system. This goes to show that it should not be shocking that the Millennial Kingdom has both law and grace as components of its administration.

It is not to say the Theocratic, historical Kingdom of Israel was not spiritual; it was. Even Paul said the Law was spiritual (Rom. 7:14). They had a unifying belief in the God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and even if it was often given only lip service, it was a unifying, spiritual component of the nation. They had the Temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices that served to remind them of their theocratic King and to keep them in fellowship with Him. At least, that was the intent; whether they lived up to it or not fluctuated as their faithfulness ebbed and flowed throughout the nation's history.

There was also a political aspect to the Theocratic Kingdom. The leader was limited to executive and judicial functions. The people had a lot of freedom to carry out their own affairs on the local level. There was no infrastructure in place that would encourage empire building by the nation. Israel was a nation unlike any other; they had God's direct involvement in their affairs. When they entered the Promised Land, it was God who directed their battles and the Israelites were simply His tool to accomplish His purposes. The responsibilities Israel had to the world were spiritual and moral; therefore, their avoidance of political and spiritual entanglements with other nations was the result of Divine intervention. That is still true. How else can we possibly explain the preservation of the Jewish people throughout the centuries of the Diaspora? Any other small people group would have been absorbed into the various cultures of the world, but not the Jews. The Jewish people are a specifically God-created group set aside by God for His specific purposes and those purposes will not be thwarted no matter how much Satan tries to destroy the Jewish people. This also serves to explain the presence of the Jews back in the land in unbelief at this time. The nation will ultimately be restored in the Millennial Kingdom and it only then will reach the full potential God intended for it from the beginning.

Numbers 23:9⁹ "... Behold, a people who dwells apart, And will not be reckoned among the nations.

The Theocratic Kingdom of Israel also had a religion component. The fact is, apart from Christ Jesus, you can't separate, in the Jewish mind, Jews from Judaism, then or now even though the Law of Moses was done away at the cross. They may not believe Judaism very much and many of them are atheists today, but Judaism and being a Jew are so closely identified one with the other that they really cannot be separated. Again, that is in their mind and not in reality. That's why so many Jews think that becoming a Christian means they can no longer be considered a Jew. All of this does change when a Jew believes in Jesus, but they are still a Jewish person. The priestly aspect of Jewish life was not to be usurped by any person outside the ranks of the Aaronic priesthood. King Uzziah usurped the duties of a priest and was struck with leprosy as a result.

2 Chronicles 26:16–21 ¹⁶But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men. ¹⁸They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the LORD God."
¹⁹But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he

was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. ²⁰Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. ²¹King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.

There was an economic aspect to the Theocratic Kingdom. Before entering Egypt, the patriarchs were very wealthy in terms of flocks and herds. Whether they were able to retain this wealth during their time as slaves is probably questionable. After the plagues devastated Egypt, the Egyptians gave the Israelites much of the wealth they had in gold, silver, precious jewels, and so on. Once they entered the Promised Land, they garnered wealth in the form of real estate and the possessions of the Canaanites in those instances God allowed them to keep it. There would also always be poor people in the land, but God made provisions for that and for the restoration of property that was sold. God promised prosperity in the land.

Genesis 47:1 ¹Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen."

Exodus 12:35–36 ³⁵Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; ³⁶and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

Numbers 26:52–56 ⁵²Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁵³"Among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. ⁵⁴"To the larger group you shall increase their inheritance, and to the smaller group you shall diminish their inheritance; each shall be given their inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. ⁵⁵"But the land shall be divided by lot. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. ⁵⁶"According to the selection by lot, their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller groups."

Joshua 8:27 ²⁷Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city as plunder for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.

Deuteronomy 7:12–16 ¹²"Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. ¹³"He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.

¹⁴“You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle. ¹⁵“The LORD will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you. ¹⁶“You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

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