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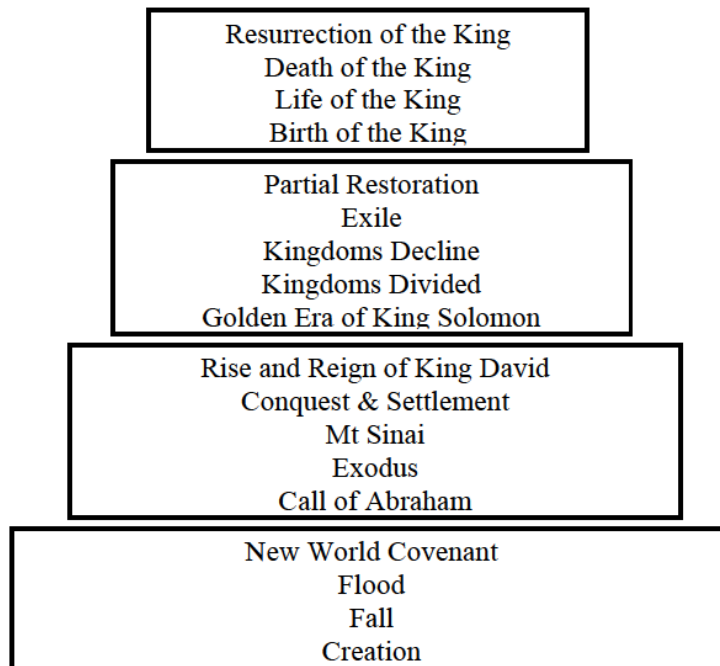
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Introduction To Ascension & Session Of Christ – Part 1

I've summarized all the material we have covered up to this point. I did it that way because we need to realize when we come into the NT that we're coming in to the last few chapters of the story. I don't know how long it will be before it dawns on the leadership in evangelical circles that 2/3rds of the Bible is OT, and God wrote the Bible. Apparently they think that the first 2/3rds is just a disposable section and we can sort of do away with that and get to the NT; we're NT Christians. No you're not; the NT grows out of the OT. The OT is the foundation of the NT. So the OT is necessary to get to the NT and in this diagram, just count the number of things; we've been through eighteen different events over the last three years. We've gone through doctrine after doctrine.



We've gone through all kinds of controversy because every one of these is debated and rejected by the world system in which we live. At Creation we have a big fight about Origins, at the Fall a big fight about Evil and Suffering, at the Flood a big fight about Geology and Fossils, at the New World Covenant we have a big fight about Natural law vs. the Word of God as the controlling factor.

Then we have the Call of Abraham; we have a fight about that because this represents discrimination against everybody that's not a Jew; now we have the Gentiles angry because God chose to call Abraham without consulting a committee of all people. God called Abraham because He wanted to call Abraham. That's His right; that's His privilege. God calls him and we have a big disruption in history; there's constant warfare from the Call of Abraham to the present day and this warfare has not stopped and with all due respect to the President of the United States he's not going to stop it. The only person that's going to stop it is the Lord Jesus Christ and He will stop it when Israel receives Him.

The point is that all these events are background leading up to the origin of the Church. Why is the Church existing? It is kind of an odd body when you look at all these events having to do with Israel, Israel, Israel, Israel, what's this Church thing here? How did that get started? Those are the questions that we're going to deal with as we go through the next events; we're going to add four or five more events to these eighteen. One of the first events we're going to deal with is the Heavenly Origin of the Church, And to do that we have to introduce the ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the founding points of the Church. Again, we're dealing with neglected sections of Scripture but we've got to remember they all are based on these previous events. It doesn't make sense to start in the NT. It doesn't make any sense to start with the Church. The Church is at the end, not at the beginning.

Let's deal with a problem. The problem that we have to deal with when we come to asking a question about the nature of the Church, and by the way, this is not a theory, but we ask the question what is the nature of the Church? We're part of the Church, we are the Church, and we're trying to find out our nature so we can figure out our purpose in history. What are we doing? And why is what we're doing in the Church different than Israel? How

come there's a difference. Why is it that certain things that Jesus did don't fit too well with what we're to do? Remember when we were dealing with His life we observed Him saying, do not go to the Gentiles, they're dogs, go only to the house of Israel. Why isn't that for the Church? That's not the marching order to the Church; different marching order, different gospel. That was the gospel to Israel, it wasn't the gospel to the Church. The gospel to the Church is to go to all nations. So what happened? Something happened; something's different. The picture then, what we're driving at is where is our place in the grand scheme, where's the Church in all this? Up to now it's always been Israel, Israel, Israel, now we're coming to the Church. What are we doing? In this introductory section we're going to start off with a problem to set up where we're going. Let's get the problem in mind.

How was history left when the Lord Jesus Christ died? We have the birth, the life, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have His resurrection. We finished studying those. Jesus Christ rose, He ascended, and He disappeared from earth. So Jesus Christ's career on earth appears to be ended. What's puzzling about this is that if you look at His birth, it was said that He would reign as the Son of David. It was said by the angel Gabriel that He would sit on the throne of His father David and reign in the kingdom. John the Baptist said of Him, "Behold, the Lamb of God," and he said "repent for the Kingdom is at hand," meaning it's imminent, the Kingdom is imminent. Well, if the King came and the Kingdom was imminent why isn't the King here? Where did the King go? And how can you have a Kingdom without a King? *The problem is that when Christ died what happened to the Kingdom program?* It appeared in His early ministry; He kept preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. He said Israel, I am your Messiah, receive Me. If they had what would have happened? The Kingdom would have come. But Israel did not accept her Messiah so the Kingdom didn't come, then He goes to the cross.

The King Himself warned His followers of His rejection by Israel and the ensuing historical age between His first and second comings. When Jesus Christ walked the face of the earth people weren't thinking in terms of two comings—Messiah comes, He's the King, the Kingdom comes. So it was an offer to Israel to accept her King. But God doesn't treat people like robots and God put the perfect leader into the nation and Israel had about as much discernment as American voters seem to have today. We would vote for Satan

as long as he kept the economy going. In that day the issue was are we going to be free from Rome? Are you going to carry out a military campaign and get us free, never mind this religious stuff, I've got to get out from under Rome. So here's this Jesus coming along and what does He do? He starts agitating the wrong way. He gets everybody upset, and the high priest said look, if this guy keeps this up, the Romans are going to come in here and we're going to really have a problem so let's knock Him off and get rid of the problem. Shoot Him, get rid of Him, solve the problem, but let's not let the Romans get involved with this thing, we've already got enough Romans around. It seemed an expedient solution.

So the First Coming wasn't the first coming in people's minds; there was simply the Messiah's coming. As you progress through the three synoptic Gospels, you can diagram Him this way: that Jesus preaches publicly to the masses, Jesus preaches very clearly, His instruction method is straightforward. He builds in popularity with the people, people see the miracles, and then in the middle of this the Pharisees get jealous and they start to reject Him. That's the passage in Matt 12, the passage that says every sin shall be forgiven except the sin of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. That's the national leadership rejecting Him. At that point there's a shift and Jesus begins to teach privately to His disciples, Jesus begins to teach with a fuzzy method, He starts to use parables. He starts to introduce things He hasn't taught before. He taught clearly before, now it's like He's teaching in code, a secret code to His followers: that I'm going to let you in on something here, and the whole tenor of all three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke changes if you read them. You've got to read the whole Gospel in one setting to see that, but you'll see, all of a sudden He's pulling back, He's expecting to be crucified.

The teaching of two Comings was something new and not clearly foreseen in OT prophecy. Jesus filled in details not covered by the ancient prophets who saw a picture of Messiah coming but could not distinguish between a first and second coming." Turn to 1 Pet. 1:11. This is a classic passage that tells you the frustration that OT saints felt, and that, in fact, the disciples were confused. They got kind of irritated by this vagueness, this apparent vagueness in the word of God. Verse 10, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within

them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.” Notice this carefully, look at the verb; the verb is “predict.” What did they predict? “the sufferings” and “the glories.” So what Peter is saying is that in the OT there were two themes connected with Messianic prophecy, suffering and glory. The prophets struggled to see how these two got together in the Messiah. How can the Messiah both suffer and reign in glory?

Let me show you an example of what they were struggling with. Turn to Zech 9:9. This is a very famous passage where you have this mixture of suffering and glory. It’s an example of what Peter is talking about. This is what the prophets were struggling with. Here’s the suffering: Verse 9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” On a donkey? Granted the kings were not supposed to ride horses, but how can the Messiah who is bringing salvation, this guy that’s going to lead Israel in a victorious military battle be riding on a donkey? See how that doesn’t ring of victory?

But then look at verse 10, here’s the victory. “I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.” Now that’s leading a military campaign, that’s issuing in a reign of glory. Here you have the prophets (look at verse 9 and look at verse 10) and they say, hey, wait a minute, how can the Messiah lead a military campaign mounted on a puny little ass? They couldn’t decipher two comings, one suffering and one in glory. We could go into hundreds of cases of this but Peter’s citing the problem that the prophets who were led by the Spirit of Christ themselves couldn’t make it out. In other words, if we could take a time machine and go back and sit down with Zechariah and say, Zechariah, I’m a little confused, I read in v 9 this lowly suffering Messiah, then in v 10 I read this powerful glorious Messiah; how do you put it together? And Zechariah would probably look up at us and say I don’t, I write as I am directed by the Spirit, He gives me a vision, I write it down, I’m not authorized to change it; a message comes in today I write it down, a message comes in tomorrow I write it down. It’s not my job to get it all together. So there’s this roughness, this unfinished-ness to OT prophecy, this incompleteness, and that’s the point that we want to make, that OT prophecy is not form fitting everything together.

So in walks the Lord Jesus Christ; He offers Himself to the nation, Matt 1-12; He's rejected by the national leadership, Matt 12; now turn to Matt 13. At this point the nation, as a nation, has just articulated its rejection of the Messiah and that sets up the Kingdom problem. That's why in Matt 13 things begin to change. We want to look at some of the things that begin to change. Verse 10, "And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?'" Jesus hadn't done this before. Remember the Sermon on the Mount? There are no parables there, there are some illustrations but you wouldn't say the Sermon on the Mount had parables in it. But now all of a sudden it's parables. So they said why are you teaching this way? In verse 11 He begins to tell why He changed His teaching methodology. "And He answered and said to them, 'To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.'" Verse 13, "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." Then He quotes Isaiah's prophecy which we can't get into now. The point we're making in this section of Scripture is that Jesus begins to discuss something called "the mysteries of the kingdom." These "mysteries of the kingdom" mean something is changing here. When we say mysteries we don't mean spooky, ghoully stuff, we mean some previously unrevealed truths about this OT kingdom that Jesus is now going to reveal. They knew a lot about the kingdom but what these parables teach are things they did not know from the OT. These are new truths. We harp about not much being new in the NT, this stuff is new. And it's the parable of the sower and the seed, the parable of the pearl of great price, etc.

Briefly, the new revelation is that the judgment of evil and subsequent establishment of the Kingdom will occur at the end of a parenthetical age, (Matt 13:39-42, 49, cf. 7:21-23; 25:34)." What Jesus is saying is I started something but I'm not finishing it right now. It's like Jesus' career is coming to a close, there's going to be something else start up, then His career is going to start up again and He'll judge and bring in the Kingdom. So He's starting to put a gap between what He's started at this coming and what He will one day finish at a second coming.

Look at verse 37, the parable of the wheat and the tares, verse 37, "And He answered and said, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, ³⁸and

the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one.” Verse 39, “and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is” when? “...the harvest is at the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be” when? “at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴²and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” etc.

So you can see that the Lord Jesus looked down the corridors of time and He said there's going to be a parenthetical period before the Kingdom is established when you have good and evil growing up alongside one another. The evil is in Matt 12, and Jesus is not going to let evil into the Kingdom. So if the nation is in unbelief and He's not going to let them into the kingdom then who is he going to let into the kingdom? He can't get rid of the nation; He's promised them the Kingdom. So what happens? That's the setup for this age that we're now living in. We become sons of the kingdom through faith in the finished work of Christ. So the age in which we find ourselves actually came into existence as a result of a negative choice of Israel towards their Messiah. If you think of this hypothetically, if Israel had received her Messiah then they would have gone right into the Kingdom and this age of the Church, our salvation, would never have happened. Obviously in the sovereignty of God, God has a plan, etc. But I'm talking about from the creature perspective - history could have gone differently, a lot differently. So at the end of this parenthetical age the Messiah will come again, He'll judge evil and establish the Kingdom. Professor Alva McClain puts it well: “The present age, viewed from the standpoint of the Kingdom, is a time of *preparation*. During this period the Son of Man is sowing seed, generating and developing a spiritual nucleus for the future Kingdom, a group called ‘sons of the kingdom’. At the same time He is permitting a parallel development of evil in the world under the leadership of Satan. It is the purpose of God to bring both to a ‘harvest,’ when the good and the bad will be separated, and then to establish the Kingdom in power and righteousness.”

So the issue then is what happens with the rejection of Christ? Something is changing, from a creature perspective. Let's diagram this as a line; this represents the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ during His incarnation.

That ministry begins, it grows, it is rejected, it comes to an end, He's crucified, and we'll draw a parenthesis, then Israel receives Him and the Kingdom is established. This is fulfillment of the OT prophesied Kingdom. Nothing has changed here; the nature of the Kingdom has not changed. This is critical because we're going to be fighting something for the rest of this section of the Church. This is where there's a division inside our evangelical camp, and we're going to talk about it, I want to show you where this sets up. This Kingdom is as prophesied in the OT. It is not a modified Kingdom, it is not a spiritual version of the OT Kingdom, it is the OT Kingdom. The word "Kingdom" still means Kingdom, because if the Jews are sitting there listening to the Lord Jesus Christ and He's talking about Kingdom, what Kingdom do you suppose they had in their minds? The Kingdom that they knew from the OT. When he says mysteries of the kingdom He's not saying a mystery kingdom, as in some new kingdom. He's saying mysteries related to the kingdom, previously unrevealed truths, namely that there's going to be a parenthetical age before it is established. But the nature of the kingdom is the same.

This view of the present age as a parenthesis is fiercely opposed by amillennialists and postmillennialists who fear that it relegates the Church to a secondary role and detracts from the central purpose of the First Coming of Christ. Let me explain that; there's a lot in that sentence. The view of the age as something that was pried open, something that was injected, as it were, and inside here we have the Church, this view is argued against vehemently by amillennialists and postmillennialists. We talked at the end of the OT framework about amillennialism, premillennialism and postmillennialism. So let's review. Here's the premil position, and by the way, because I always hear this I'm going to address it: when you start talking about this people say oh, we can't bother with all those prophetic details. Well, you'd better bother with it because this sets up the nature of what you're supposed to be doing in the Church. If you are pre-, a-, or post-mill that determines what the mission and priorities of the Church are. So this is not a peripheral thing, "oh it's just a detail of prophecy." No, it sets up priorities for obedience in the Church Age. Let me show you how.

In the premillennial position, what does "mil" mean? "Mil" means a thousand years. What does pre-mil mean? Jesus comes pre, before, the one thousand years. So in this case we have the Second Coming and we have the millennial

Kingdom over here, Jesus is going to come, judge and then we have the Kingdom. That's premillennialism. Premillennialists are literal interpreters of OT vocabulary about the Kingdom, they don't change it. When you don't change the vocabulary and hold it constant and keep OT meanings in those words, you wind up as a premillennialist; you have to. You'll always wind up that way.

Later in the Church Age, 3rd or 4th century, the Church went basically amillennial. Roman Catholicism is amillennial theology. What is also amillennial theology is most of Protestantism as it existed in the time of the Reformers. You say why didn't John Calvin and Martin Luther become premil? Because Martin Luther and John Calvin were just trying to get the gospel straight, they didn't have time to go messing around with all the details of eschatology because they had all they could do with soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. What does amillennialism say? A- means what? A- is a negation. There isn't going to be a one thousand years. So amillennial means no millennium. How can you not have a millennium? By changing the meaning of the words, by interpreting them in a spiritual way. Another device is well, the nation Israel rejected Jesus, the nation rejected the Messiah so Israel's Kingdom is gone, tough, that's what happens so the millennial Kingdom is never brought into existence historically, it's gone; throw out the baby with the bathwater. That's amillennialism.

Then we have postmillennialism and postmillennialism is actually a version of amillennialism that has progress in it. What does "post" mean? After, Christ comes after the millennium. After the what? After the millennium. Well, what's the millennium then? It's what the church is building. Oh really, you've been in a church more than five years and you think they're building the kingdom? What the Church is building is a picture of the Kingdom of God? I don't think so! If it is God help us. Postmillennialism argues that the Church is going to do such a wonderful job with the great commission that it's going to grow and conquer the world and when it conquers the world it'll call Jesus down and we'll hand over the kingdom to Him, here's your Kingdom. Of course I'm being a little facetious. Postmillennialists believe that God works through the Church to bring that about but the point still is chronologically Jesus Christ comes after the Church has conquered the world.

Let me say what happens politically and ecclesiastically. Where do you think premillennialism goes politically? If you're a premil how does that affect your politics? How does that affect your belief about the Church? If you believe that the Kingdom can't come until Christ returns is your focus going to be on Christ or the Kingdom? It's going to be on Christ. So in this view the Church is not in a conquistador role; the Church is to be faithful to whatever Christ has told it to do and stick with that. If you are an amillennialist you don't know what the millennium is about so you kind of discard all that and the Church kind of becomes a surrogate for all that OT prophecy.

The a- and post-mill positions are therefore what we call replacement theology. I'll explain that term because I'm going to use it again and again. By replacement theology we mean that the Church has replaced Israel in the plan of God, that when Israel rejected her Messiah that was it, from that point on Israel has no national purpose whatsoever, the present state of Israel is not stage setting for a future Israel, it's just a bunch of Jews that are causing trouble in the Middle East. In this view everything that was given to Israel has now been transferred over to the Church in a spiritual way, minus all the discipline of course. You never hear them talk about the cursings and the judgments, oh no, we don't transfer those to the Church, we just transfer the blessings.

Let's think about Israel and the Church. What was Israel, a nation or a voluntary association? It was a nation. What is the Church? It's a voluntary association. If the Church replaces Israel do you see what it sets up in the mind of people? That the Church is a nation, and the Church has kind of a political role of some sort. And that's why these theologies have traditionally led to national Churches. Lutheranism, The Church of England, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland kind of, the Congregational Church in New England under the Puritans, these were political institutions. We can talk about the Pope but the Protestant national Churches had just as much political influence as the Roman Catholic Church. They dominated their countries, and woe to you if you ever crossed them, you got in trouble real fast.

So this theology is not just a little fine point; this theology breeds certain political and ecclesiological stances. In Germany, if you went through and did a survey in the 1930's of Germany do you know where the Germans who

opposed Hitler came from, largely? Plymouth Brethren, premil groups. Why do you think so? “Fine point of theology?” I don’t think so; we have people here whose families go back to these groups who stood up to what was going on in Nazi Germany. They were pre-mill Plymouth Brethren and you better believe it made a difference. The theologians of the Lutheran Church said, hey, the kingdom has come, the kingdom of God has come in the person of the Fuhrer because they couldn’t distinguish the Church politically as an entity because the Church was Germany. I mean, every German is proud of Luther, Luther translated the Bible into German, he created the German language. So it was very difficult to distinguish German politics from Christianity. It’s replacement theology that spawned this.

It also has another fruit that we’ve noticed in history. Not only does it tend to spawn national churches but it tends to spawn anti-Semitism. This shouldn’t be hard to see. Why does it spawn anti-Semitism? What is the name of the theology? Replacement theology. Do Jews have any more purpose in history? What was the Jew’s last act in history in replacement theology? Rejected Christ, bad people, so anti-Semitism and national churches are spawned out of this eschatology. Ideas have consequences and bad ideas have bad consequences. So it behooves us to get our eschatology straight and that’s what we’re going to do most of this section; we’re going to work with the details of eschatology.

“In short, was the triumphant Kingdom to be inside mortal history or was it essentially the eternal state? After Christ came and was rejected, the controversy became more complex because of the rise of the Church and its relationship with the Kingdom and Israel. Was the Church a ‘spiritualized’ version of Israel and the Kingdom (*amillennialism*)? Or was it actually a nation-like entity replacing Israel that was to conquer the world and bring into existence a physical-political kingdom to hand over to the Messiah (*postmillennialism*)? Or was the Church a ‘new body’ distinct from Israel which somehow prepared the way for the yet-to-be-realized Kingdom (*premillennialism*)?”

We’re talking about Reform theology and we’re going to deal with that increasingly so let me point out what we’re doing so you can build your vocabulary because you can’t think without vocabulary. We’re going to build a little theological vocabulary. Over here I’m going to put the word “Reformed.”

Here I'm going to put the word "Dispensational." This is not perfectly accurate because Dispensational theology actually came out of the Reformed camp. The early dispensationalists were all Reformed people. Dr. John Walvoord, who was Chancellor at Dallas Seminary, was a Presbyterian and he was a Reformed theologian. I always like to remind people about that when I discuss this with my Reformed friends and they always make a distinction and say you can't be a dispensational and Reformed. Yes you can, John Walvoord was. Reformed theology spawned dispensationalism. However, Reformed theology tends to be amil and postmil, there are sometimes premil's but the premillennialism isn't the full kind of premillennialism; it's the idea that Israel has no national future but somehow the Jews will come into the Church finally and that will be sort of the final Kingdom type thing. Dispensationalists are always premil. So as you walk around Christian circles and go into Christian schools and discuss with Christian friends you'll see these things. You'll see this in some of your Christian acquaintances; I'm just showing you where people are coming from.

Here's why the Reformed people don't like dispensationalism, don't like it for a number of reasons. If you identify yourself as believing in a literal prophecy don't be surprised if someone doesn't say oh, you're one of those dispensational people, and you wonder are they calling me names or what are they doing. Is that a bad name, a good name or what? Here's their view of what's going on here. Always understand people.

Advocates of Reformed theology insist that divine cause-effect must be explained as though we can totally comprehend it. They're not quite so blunt but the idea is that... here's the argument: did Jesus come to die on the cross? Yes, you can't say that was a peripheral act. If He hadn't died on the cross where would we be? Understand that, they are right there, because Reformed theology is correct when they say you've got to make the cross of Christ the center of Jesus' ministry, they're right. So their idea of us is that when we argue that when Jesus was offering the kingdom to Israel prior to the cross, and that the cross came in because of their rejection, they think that we're saying that the cross is plan B. That if Messiah had walked into Israel and said accept Me as your King and they did then the kingdom would have come and there never would have been a cross. That's not what we're saying but that's what they think we're saying. There would still have to have been a cross. It just would have unfolded differently.

But understand what's going on here. Reformed theology insists that divine cause-effect must be explained as though we totally comprehend it. Therefore, they demand that Christ died for only the elect, we went through that, the limited atonement issue, we can't have any waste of the blood of Christ, that's Reformed theology. What bothers the Reformed mentality is the fear that God has decreed something and it goes to waste. So in their mind, Jesus could never have died for the non-elect, because the non-elect go to hell, they never receive the benefits of the cross. So in the Reformed mind they have a way of seeing God's sovereignty work out; that gets them into these positions.

Likewise, they demand that Israel's rejection of Christ (which is so central to the Cross), marked the end of that nation's position in God's plan and hence the Kingdom promises to it." That was fundamental, it was part of the decree to go to the cross, and that decree to go to the cross meant that Christ had to be rejected. If Christ had to be rejected the nation had to be ended; that was it, it's over, period. The idea that Jesus made a genuine offer to bring the Kingdom to Israel prior to the Cross and that Israel rejected this offer but will one day still receive the Kingdom is anathema to this kind of Reformed theology. Proponents of this theology believe that this approach makes the Cross a mere 'plan B' in history because it results from the negative side of a choice.

A negative side of a choice. Here's the Reformed position. You go through history and people are faced with choices. Israel encountered the Lord Jesus Christ's kingdom offer. When offered with this choice Israel went negative and rejected. As a result of that there was the cross. The Reformed mind doesn't like to see that; they would rather see this - that God sovereignly worked everything out and He cast aside Israel. They'd rather draw it that way; He cast aside Israel and brought about the cross. Israel was sort of sacrificed in order to get Christ sacrificed. They don't like the idea that Christ at this point was offering Himself to the nation as the King and they could have received Him and had their Kingdom. In one sense they could have received Him; they didn't and therefore the cross came about from the negative side of the choice. And they say boy, that's not honoring God's sovereignty.

Let's see if it's honoring God's sovereignty. "Such theology, however, forgets that very similar 'offers', 'rejections', and 'plan B's' occurred in past history. In Eden the offer to man to dominate and subdue the earth was rejected and brought about our present fallen mortal history with the need for the Cross the result of a negative choice." What if Adam and Eve had disobeyed? Would Jesus have had to go to the cross? Then didn't Jesus go to the cross because of a negative choice on Adam and Eve's part? So there's a clear cut case, right there. Next case: "In the centuries after the flood the offer to build a new civilization was rejected and resulted in the calling out of a counter-culture in Abraham (result of a negative choice)." Nimrod, all the people apostacized in Noah's family, destroyed civilization, paganized it, as a result of a negative choice God called out Abraham. Well, it sounds like your saying that the civilization that grew out of Noah could have been a real genuine civilization. Yeah, that's what it was all about. Another case: "Immediately after Mt. Sinai the offer of Canaan to Israel was rejected and resulted in a second miraculous invasion under Joshua 40 years later (result of a negative choice). In the days of Samuel the offer of a politically simple theocracy was rejected and resulted in the rise of the monarchy, the monarchy, which defined the role of Messiah (result of a negative choice)." Remember Samuel's day, the office of King was very reluctantly created as a result of the Judges period, every man did that which was right in his own eyes, so you had the rise of the monarchy. Yet the monarchy was necessary to define the nature of the Messiah, but that was the result of the negative choice. "Each of these situations could be similarly criticized as bringing about 'plan B's', but that is the clear pattern of God's working in history." They are means by which God brings about His plan, not really plan B's of any sort.

So when we dispensationalists talk about Christ offering Himself, offering the Kingdom to Israel we're doing nothing other than what is already laid down as a pattern in the pages of Scripture. It's the same argument. So, what I'm trying to do here is set up the next section. Stay tuned and we'll look more at this kingdom bit. The present age has been brought into existence by the negative side of a choice, Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ.

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