

AN AMILLENNIAL REPLY TO PETERS: A REVIEW ARTICLE

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The Theocratic Kingdom. By George N. H. Peters. Kregel, 1978 [1884], 2175 pp.

This massive three-volume defense of dispensational theology was first published in 1884 by Funk and Wagnalls. Kregel reprinted it in 1952 with a preface by Wilbur M. Smith and again in 1972 with a biography of the author written by John H. Stoll. The fact that this last edition of a century-old book of this size has had at least four printings tells us something of its popularity and influence. Such a work can be studied with profit whether one agrees with the writer or not.

George N. H. Peters (1825-1909) was born in Pennsylvania and pastored a number of Lutheran churches in Ohio. But in his long life his frequent illnesses and increasing blindness kept him from continuing long in the pastorate. He devoted his time and energy to the writing of this work. Otherwise it might not have been so long or so complete.

The size and scope of the work is impressive. In its three volumes it comprises 2175 pages of two sizes of print: small and very small. It is about twice as long as the Bible itself. In the preface Smith calls it "the most exhaustive, thoroughly annotated and logically arranged study of Biblical prophecy that appeared in our country during the nineteenth century" (I 1). Smith also, in characteristic fashion, counted the names in the index and reports that Peters quoted from more than four thousand different authors both ancient and modern.

The work is organized into 206 propositions plus a concluding chapter. Each proposition is explained briefly and then defended in numbered observations, and each observation is followed by footnotes set in smaller type and printed as part of the text. This seems frustrating at first, but familiarity with the plan shows it has advantages (such as easy cross-referencing). References in this article will give in parentheses the volume and page numbers.

I. BASIC THESIS

The thesis of this work is that in the Abrahamic covenant God promised the land of Canaan as the eternal possession of Abraham and his descendants; that this promise was confirmed and expanded in the Mosaic covenant at Sinai; that to this was added in the Davidic covenant the promise that a son of David would sit on his throne and rule forever; that these covenant promises were not fulfilled even by the first coming of Christ but that their fulfillment has been postponed to the second advent when they shall all come to pass literally. But it would be best to let Peters tell it in his own words. This he does in two places:

The view that we have all along maintained is this, viz., that this Kingdom, Theocratic-Davidic, is of divine origin and is specially claimed as God's, *He Himself* being the Ruler in and through the reigning King; that this Kingdom, being not of worldly but divine outgrowth, is promised to Jesus Christ as the promised

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David's Son; and that, owing to the foreknown rejection of the Messiah, etc., is postponed to the ending of this age or dispensation (II 32).

Thus we have *first* the covenant with its promises; *then* a Theocracy with a special ordering growing out of it; *then* the amplification of this covenant with David, owing to the foreseen fall; *then* the overthrow of the Theocratic Kingdom on account of sinfulness; *then* the prophetic announcements, based on the covenants, of the restoration of this Theocratic Kingdom (under a new arrangement) by David's Son and Lord; *then* the rejection of it by the nation and the atoning death of Jesus, with the postponement of the Kingdom to the Sec. Advent; then, to provide a seed for Abraham, the call of the Jews and Gentiles; the establishment of the Chr. Church; . . . the fulfillment of covenant and promises at the Sec. Advent (III 343).

II. SUPPORTING THE THESIS

From Peters' own summary of his argument it can be seen that there are five steps in supporting his thesis that it would be well to consider: (1) Strong emphasis on the Davidic covenant. (2) This covenant was not literally fulfilled, and so it will be in the future. (3) Jesus offered to fulfill the covenant by establishing the kingdom, but the Jews rejected him. (4) The kingdom was postponed to the second advent. (5) At the second advent the theocratic kingdom will be established on earth. We shall look at each of these.

1. *Emphasis on the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.* The problem is not merely that these covenants are emphasized but rather that Peters interprets them both literally and then insists on bending all the rest of the Bible to conform to this interpretation. To see what is meant here, take the aspect of each that Peters emphasizes most. In the Abrahamic covenant it is the promise of the land of Canaan, and in the Davidic covenant it is the promise of an eternal kingdom to a son of David.

In discussing the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:4-21; 17:4-16; 22:15-18) Peters enumerates twelve specific things promised but emphasizes Gen 13:15 where God says to Abraham, "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." Peters strongly emphasizes the need for this to be literally fulfilled by Abraham and his descendants, the people of Israel, possessing this piece of the earth's crust as their everlasting possession.

He treats the Davidic covenant in similar fashion. God said to David regarding his son, "He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam 7:13, 16 *KJV* as used by Peters). Here he insists that the literal earthly kingdom is promised to the nation of Israel forever. He also emphasizes the unconditioned aspect of these two promises of land and kingdom. We shall return to this later.

2. *The covenants have not been fulfilled but will be.* In regard to the promise of the land Peters declares that "the descendants *never* possessed the land promised to Abraham from the Nile to the Euphrates" (I 297). Again, "it is only by a *perversion of facts* that a fulfillment can be made out, although it is attempted under the reigns of David and Solomon" (I 298). The first statement is based partly on falsely taking "the river of Egypt" (Gen 15:18) to be the Nile. The second statement is made by insisting on a particular kind of fulfillment and by ignoring such OT statements of fulfillment as 1 Kgs 4:20-21; Josh 21:43-45; 1 Chr 27:23; 2 Chr 1:9; Neh 9:7-8. A third factor is the neglect of Deut 28:15-68, which

declares so graphically the way in which disobedience causes the promise of land to be forfeited.¹ The idea that these covenants must be fulfilled in a particular manner and that they have not been fulfilled yet is not a side issue but is basic to Peters' whole work. It determines the shape of his thesis and his manner of interpreting the rest of the Bible, including all of the NT. As we shall see, when he puts major emphasis on what he calls "the analogy of faith" he means that the rest of the Bible must be made to conform to his interpretation of the kind of fulfillment we must expect of these two covenants.

3. *The Jews rejected Jesus' offer of the kingdom.* Proposition 57 is captioned: "This Kingdom was offered to the Jewish nation, but the nation rejected it" (I 375). Since this is a key step in the whole work it is important to see how it is supported. Two things need to be proved to support this proposition: that Jesus offered to set up an earthly kingdom with a throne somewhere in Israel, and that the Jewish people rejected his offer. In this chapter Peters says nothing to support the offer of the kingdom, but elsewhere (I 266-273) he infers this from the statements of Jesus that the kingdom was "at hand." Peters says that this expression meant that Jesus was about to restore the Davidic kingdom in both its religious and civil aspects. But this is too small a foundation for such a large structure. There should be some explicit statement for such a basic concept if we are to accept the idea that Jesus came to do something he never mentioned. Rather, we find him declaring that he came to save the world from sin, fulfilling Matt 1:21 and John 3:16.²

4. *The kingdom was postponed to the second advent.* There is no question that enough of the Jews rejected Jesus to have him put to death, but it is not true that all the Jews rejected him. Yet Peters insists that "just so soon as the representatives of the nation met in council and conspired to put Jesus to death, then, released from the first part of His mission, *His style of preaching also changed.* Instead of proclaiming that the Kingdom was nigh to the nation, He now directly intimates and declares that *it was not nigh*" (I 379).

Except for parables (and no doctrine should be founded on a parable) the strongest proof offered by Peters is Matt 21:43: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." He interprets this to mean that the Jewish kingdom was postponed and that God began to gather together a people whom he would temporarily bless. This is not what Jesus said. He said "the kingdom of God" would be "given" to others. He did not say "for a while."³

5. *At the second advent Christ will establish the theocratic kingdom on earth* (II 121-198). Peters likes to call it the re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom and insists that it will be here on earth, since he says that even "heaven" means the land of Israel (II 11-15). The primary proof offered that the kingdom will be set up on earth is that the Davidic kingdom was on earth—earthly—and that the

¹R. B. Jones, *What, Where, and When Is The Millennium?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975) 47-48; O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1945) 57-58.

²Jones, *What, Where?,* 78-79, 96-97.

³For a serious discussion of this point see A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 212-217.

future kingdom will be earthly in the same way. "Our appeal, with Barnabas and all other Millenarians, for our *foundation is in the covenanted Theocratic Kingdom*. To show that we are *fundamentally* incorrect, to get at the *root* of our doctrine, let them go to the Davidic Covenant and prove that *the grammatical sense of that covenant is not meant*" (III 244). In the pages following this statement Peters insists repeatedly that anyone differing with them on this point must be able to show him some unvarying rule of interpretation by which to prove that the kingdom can be any other than a civil/religious kingdom right here on earth. This can be done by demonstrating that the NT does not support his interpretation. Peters consistently emphasizes that 2 Sam 7:12-16 teaches an earthly kingdom to be set up by the Messiah and uses this concept as a touchstone by which to understand all the rest of the Bible, even the teachings of Jesus. This leads inevitably to a distortion of plain NT passages. To see how his distortion works let us see what Peters does with some NT statements and in the process learn something of his method of exegesis.

III. EXAMPLES OF EXEGESIS

In the OT Peters emphasizes the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7). In regard to the first he stresses three aspects: the land, the nation and the kingdom—which is implied in Gen 17:6. In regard to the second, the major stress is on the permanence of the kingdom and the promise of it to a descendant of David.

Gen 17:8 is quoted in regard to the land: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Peters insists that this can only be fulfilled by the nation of Israel owning and possessing the land of Canaan and that since this has never taken place it will take place after the return of Christ (I 293-311). The major reason given for this interpretation is that we must interpret it literally, not figuratively or spiritually. This he had strongly stated in Proposition 4 (I 47-67). He declared that the literal interpretation of the Biblical words is the only valid one unless Scripture itself plainly teaches or demands another. Much of what he has to say about taking the words of the Bible in their "natural, grammatical" sense is excellent, but he is not consistent in applying the principle. As we shall see he applies it strictly to Gen 17:8 and 2 Sam 7:16, builds a concept of the nation, the land and the kingdom on these passages, and then insists that all other passages, whether OT or NT, are to be so interpreted that they do not conflict with the theory built on these two passages.

To illustrate this rather serious charge, we note Peters' strong statements about the promise of land to Abraham: "To say that all this was fulfilled in the occupation of Palestine by the preparatory or initiatory possession of it by the descendants of Abraham, is not only *contradicted* by the Scriptures, but is a virtual limiting of the promises" (I 297). "It is only by a *perversion of facts* that a fulfillment can be made out, although it is attempted under the reigns of David and Solomon" (I 298). Yet Joshua declared that all that God had promised about the land had already been fulfilled: "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers, and they possessed it, and dwelt in it" (Josh 21:43). Surely Joshua cannot be accused of "perverting the facts." Peters does not mention this passage.

But he does discuss the passage in Heb 11:13-16 where it is said that Abraham and his descendants did not receive the kind of ultimate fulfillment they were looking for, since they were seeking a heavenly homeland: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly" (11:16a). He declares that first-century Jews were accustomed to calling the "restored Davidic Kingdom a heavenly Kingdom, and the country enjoying its restoration and Theocratic blessings, a heavenly country" (I 295). This very unsatisfactory interpretation seems to be all he has to say about this verse, but he does devote considerable space to the contention that the Messiah will someday set up an earthly kingdom here on earth (I 688-670; II 457-600).

John 18:36 seems to contradict this: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." It seems to be a clear statement that John makes here, but Peters gives it a strange twist:

If it were not of "the world to come," if it were not postponed to the end of the age and to a new order of things, *then* would I not be in the power of the Jews for then even my servants would fight, but the kingdom being postponed from the First to the Second Advent, my servants do not interfere with the authority of Caesar; "*but now is My Kingdom not from hence*," i.e. but now, during the present order of things, owing to this very postponement my Kingdom is not of this world.

He is saying that the Kingdom of God will be "of this world"—later, but not yet. But if that is what Jesus meant, he could most easily have said *oupō* instead of *ouk*. At the very least he would have emphasized "now," but in his first statement he did not even say *nyn*. He never hinted that his kingdom would someday be of the world. I submit that no one reading this passage in John could get from it any such ideas as Peters does if he had not already been convinced that the kingdom is really earthly and not heavenly. Jesus simply did not say what Peters declares he said.

Peters builds his concept of the kingdom of God on the Davidic covenant, which he finds in 2 Sam 7:10-16, and uses this passage and his interpretation of it as a touchstone by which to determine the correct interpretation of all other Scripture passages. In defending his interpretation of a passage that seems hard to fit into his scheme he often appeals to what he calls "the analogy of faith." Now this well-used expression has valuable use⁴ if carefully handled. But when Peters uses it he nearly always means that any Scripture passage on the kingdom must be interpreted so as to fit into his concept of an earthly restored Davidic kingdom, which he finds in 2 Sam 7:13-16. He emphatically declares that the only permissible way to contradict his presentation is to prove that his understanding of what this passage says about the Davidic kingdom is wrong, since this is the foundation of all that he writes (III 244). The way his understanding of this passage influences his exegesis can be seen by looking at what he does with some other NT passages.

Matt 12:28: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Of the four points Peters sees here, let us examine two:

2. That miracles are a manifestation of possessed power, which Jesus will exert when He establishes His kingdom.

⁴R. L. Thomas, "A Hermeneutical Ambiguity of Eschatology: The Analogy of Faith," *JETS* 23/1 (March 1980) 45-53.

4. That the miraculous, foreshowing, or foreshadowing . . . like the transfiguration, of the kingdom itself (I 89).

The problem here is that Jesus did not speak of the future but of the present. He was speaking neither of a future kingdom nor of future miracles but of a miracle he had just performed and of a kingdom he was then establishing. Peters later states that Jesus did not do much in the way of miracles (I 376-77). He is apparently saving the real miracles for his second coming.

Col 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." He admits that this is probably the strongest support for the kingdom being already established but suggests that there are two ways of understanding the passage so that it speaks of a future kingdom only. First, he suggests the principle that "future blessings are spoken of as present" (II 35). The trouble with that is that Paul here did not use the present but the aorist. Peters cites as another example of this principle Heb 12:22-23, where we find that the verb is not present but perfect. Both passages clearly speak of present—not future—results of past actions. Why does Peters not accept here the natural, grammatical, literal meaning of the words of this text?

Second, Peters quotes with approval a writer named Reed who translates *eis* by "for," making Paul say that God has "changed us for the Kingdom" (II 36). He cites Luke 9:62 as justification for this translation of *eis*. But these uses of the preposition are not at all parallel. *Eis* is here to be construed with *metestēs* and is contrasted with *ek*. *Methistēmi* is used five times in the NT (Luke 16:4; Acts 13:22; 19:26; 1 Cor 13:2; Col 1:13), always with either *ek* or *eis*. So here Paul is saying that we are delivered out of Satan's authority *into* God's kingdom. So Peters' interpretation cannot stand. He remarks in the footnote that this verse must be interpreted according to "the general analogy of the Word."

One final point here: If Peters or anyone else could succeed here in making the kingdom future, the same argument would make future our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins as they are stated in the following verse. That would not leave much for this present life.

Acts 15:16 is interpreted by Peters as clearly teaching that the kingdom was postponed by Jesus until the second advent (I 347, 439; III 534). He does this by the assumption that James is here speaking of events entirely in the future, as he quotes from Amos and Isaiah: "James corroborates the non-establishment of the Kingdom by showing that in 'after this' (i.e. after the gathering out of the Gentiles) 'I (Jesus) will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down' the postponement is most plainly taught" (I 439). But this is exactly what James did not say. If the words of Amos were referring to the second coming and not to the events being discussed by the apostles, then James committed a most astonishing *non sequitur* and quoted a statement that had nothing to do with the subject at hand.⁵ *Meta tauta* does not refer to the future in respect to James but in respect to the time of Amos. It is not a direct quotation from the LXX but rather a loose paraphrase of *bym hhw'* (a common way the prophets have of referring to the future) and a nonspecific way of referring to the messianic age. By means of this phrase Amos was simply referring to the future. James quoted the verse from Amos, stating that it had been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus and the subsequent taking of the gospel to Gentiles. Instead of teaching a

⁵R. O. Zorn, *Church and Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962) 105.

postponement of the kingdom, James is clearly stating that the prophecies of the kingdom have been fulfilled.

2 Pet 3:1-12 may serve as the final example of exegesis. Actually we are here most concerned with vv 10-12, which Peters considers such a difficult passage that he devotes 28 pages to it (II 506-534). The chief problem for Peters is that Peter says plainly that the earth on which we live will be destroyed, yet Peters has just before this declared strongly and repeatedly that this concept of the kingdom depends on the perpetuity of this earth (II 426-447). He is compelled to say this because of his rigid interpretation of 2 Sam 7:12 as teaching that Israel will have a great kingdom on this very earth, which is their inheritance. He refuses to let anything interfere with this belief. He states that he plants himself "firmly upon the oath-bound covenant which expressly locates this very Kingdom" (II 532). What he refers to here is 2 Sam 7:12, as usual. And, as usual, he states of 2 Pet 3:10, "if there is a passage which should be examined and explained according to 'the analogy of faith,' it certainly ought to be this one of Peter's" (II 512). He means by this that Peter must be interpreted solely in the light of his (Peters') understanding of the Davidic covenant. "Now the language of Peter accords with the belief that before the Millennial period could be introduced, such a Pre-Millennial judgment by fire must be inflicted" (II 507). Peter, however, did not speak of judgment but of destruction.

Peters does not discuss textual problems or he would surely have noted the variations on the last word of v 10 and made the most of it. But after all the long discussions of this problem there is not much that can be made of it. The oldest reading apparently is *eurethesetai*, but this makes no sense in the clause and does not fit with the context. Although conjectures have multiplied no one knows for sure what Peter wrote.⁶ Yet vv 11-12 leave no doubt what was meant. They make it clear that this universe is to be utterly destroyed and that there will be a "new heavens and a new earth" (v 13). But since Peters cannot accept this destruction because of his theory of the kingdom, he states plainly that we are not to take Peter's words literally (II 513). This is the more astonishing since he had in the first volume given so much space to proving that we must take the words of the Bible literally if we are to be true to God. In fact he often reiterates this principle as the basic rule of hermeneutics. But he forsakes it in the NT and in much of the OT.

This refusal to take passages literally if they would then conflict with his interpretation of the kingdom leads to a variety of problems. Beside those already noted one might well study the distortion of tenses in his discussion of Rev 1:6; 5:10 as well as in Col 1:13; John 18:36; Matt 12:28. Consider the total distortion of Jesus' plain words in John 6:15 (I 376). Note how he twists 1 Cor 15:54 and rejects Paul's interpretation there of Isa 25:8 (I 246-247, 685). Since he wants to postpone miracles to the second advent so as to fit his concept of the kingdom, he declares that Jesus did not do great miracles on earth (I 376). Look at the strange interpretation he gives of John 14:1-3 (III 53-63) while totally ignoring the following verses that show he is wrong. In the OT note his unusual understanding of Ezekiel 40-48 (III 83-91). Note the way he robs Christians of some of the great favorite passages, such as Psalm 23 (III 398); Habakkuk 3 (III 392); Matthew 5-7 (III 388).

⁶B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) 705-706.

IV. SOME FURTHER PROBLEMS

1. *Literal interpretation.* The problem here is inconsistency. As has been noted in the exegetical remarks, Peters applies the rule of literal interpretation of Scripture very selectively. For example he insists on parts of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants always being literally understood, but when he comes to Ezek 43:18-27, which describes the offerings, he insists that this must not be taken literally since to do so would make for serious problems with the whole NT. But he gives no reason for changing the rule here, since he cannot find a consistent reason (III 84-85). What he suggests is that the whole section is a conditional prophecy—conditioned on the repentance and obedience of Israel, which was not forthcoming, and so the prophecy was not fulfilled. So, referring to the statement in 43:9, Peters claims that this proves that the whole nine chapters are a conditional prophecy. But this is the very point we have been wishing all along that he could see.

2. *Conditional/unconditional prophecy.* If Peters can admit that this whole section in Ezekiel is conditional, why can he not see that all God's prophecies—except the first and second advents of the Savior and Judge—are in some way conditioned on the response of human beings? In most cases the conditions are spelled out in the prophecy itself, but even if not, Jeremiah 18 makes it clear to us that the conditions are there. For example Peters makes a major point of saying that the promise of eternal possession of the land of Israel by the nation of Israel (Deut 32:1-43) is absolute, "unconditional" (I 209). But the conditions had already been plainly spelled out in Deuteronomy 28-31 as well as the penalties for disobedience. Peters does the same thing with 2 Sam 7:12, repeatedly calling it an unconditional promise in spite of the totally ignored principle already spelled out in 1 Sam 2:30 and later elaborated in Jeremiah 18.

3. *Unfulfilled Abrahamic covenant.* Peters makes problems for himself by insisting that so many of the promises of the OT have not been fulfilled yet and so must be fulfilled in a future millennium. This is truly the foundation assumption of the whole three volumes. But what he means is that these have not been fulfilled in the way in which his understanding of them leads him to expect. As has been discussed before, he neglects the NT fulfillments while he insists on literal, earthly fulfillments of a particular kind.

4. *Roman empire still standing.* Historians do not know this, but Peters knows it—not first from his study of history but from his study of prophecy. "We may depend on it, that God's portrayal of events and their nature is far more reliable than the estimates and eulogies of men" (II 639). True, but how can Peters be so sure of his interpretation of prophecy as to rewrite history? (II 639-667). He begins by pointing out that history must be interpreted in the light of prophecy (II 639). Unless Daniel was wrong—which neither Peters nor I will admit—the kingdom was to be set up in the time of the Roman empire. That is no problem for me, but for Peters it is a most serious problem since he does not believe Jesus set up his Kingdom but that he postponed it to some still future time at the second advent. But if that be so, then the Roman empire must exist until that unknown future time (II 659) and so it is still in existence today. On this premise he seeks to trace the continuing Roman empire past the fifth century to the present (II 640-646). He got as far as 1806 by ignoring various blank spaces and transformations, but he could not trace it further except in "principles" (II 653). Yet he insists that it

will exist until the second advent when the kingdom will be established (II 656, 648).

There are three major problems with this concept: (1) History does not support it. (2) Daniel 2 and 7 seem very strange—even grotesque—if this interpretation is read back into those visions. (3) It ignores the NT fulfillment of Daniel and requires severe distortion of too many NT passages.

5. "*Analogy of faith.*" As has been pointed out above there is some value in the concept if properly handled, but I heartily agree with Robert Thomas that it ought to be considered last, after the basic exegetical labor is completed.⁷ Peters, on the other hand, insists on making his interpretation of prophecy—not the NT use of it—the norm for doctrine. So he denies the NT fulfillment of prophecies in order to continue to support his eschatological scheme.⁸ Thus he does not deal seriously with the Greek text of 1 Cor 15:54-55 or with its context. He discusses instead the quoted passages in Isa 25:8 in the context of 2 Samuel 7. When he speaks of the "analogy of faith" he means that all the rest of the Bible must be made to fit the scheme he has built on 2 Samuel 7. He stresses the importance of Deut 32:1-44 but ignores or neglects 28:1-68; 30:10; Rom 4:1-17.

V. CONCLUSION

Reading these three massive volumes has been an educational process in spite of our major disagreements on their theme. There has been a growing feeling that Peters was sincere in his search for truth but that he got caught up in a determination to show that his concept of the kingdom could be scriptural. His zeal to prove he was right made him unconscious of inconsistencies.

This is exactly what was happening to mathematicians in the time of Copernicus. They went on adding complicated spheres to their unbelievably complex model of the universe in order to make newly discovered facts fit their old scheme. Copernicus boldly considered what would happen if he theorized the sun to be the center of the solar system rather than the earth and suddenly found he had a simple solution to the ancient problem and was able to face new facts with equanimity. If Peters could only have seen the Bible with Christ the Lord as center, instead of the Davidic earthly kingdom, it would have made quite a difference. Many problems would have disappeared and others would have become solvable—or at least more tolerable.

⁷See Jones, *What, Where?*, 53.

⁸See *ibid.*, 60-64.