

The Common View of the Offer and Rejection of the Kingdom

- Covenant theologians has very little to say about the offer and rejection of the Kingdom.
- Dispensational theologians chiefly teach the offer of the Kingdom beginning with John the Baptist and ending with the warning of the “unpardonable sin” in Matthew 12:31-32.
 - The evangelical view of the unpardonable sin is nothing more than taking Scripture out of context.
 - The *blasphemy of the Holy Ghost* could not have occurred in Jesus’ lifetime, since the Holy Spirit wasn’t given until the Day of Pentecost.
 - The Hebrew nation blasphemed Jesus, but this is a *forgivable sin* (v. 32).
- My view:
 - Jesus was rejected by the people, but He said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).
 - Peter declared that what they did was done “in ignorance” (Acts 3:17).
 - The prophecies of the crucifixion were so firmly established that any concept of a Kingdom offer prior to the crucifixion creates a spurious rather than good faith offer.
 - The offer of the Kingdom comes in the power of the Holy Spirit beginning with the day of Pentecost. When this offer is ultimately refused, the nation committed the unforgiveable sin, and was subsequently destroyed.

The Initial Offer in Scripture | Acts 2:36-41

- On the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaims to Israel that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye hath crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
- With this presentation of Jesus as Messiah, they were **pricked in the heart**, a clear conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- The offer of the Spirit is given to any who will **repent and be baptized** (v. 38).

The Second Offer in Scripture | Acts 3:1-21

- Filled with awe about the healing of the lame man, Peter takes the opportunity to present the Risen King to the nation.
- Peter proclaims that they had killed Jesus in ignorance, but now needed to **repent and be converted** (v. 19) and that such repentance was the criteria for **times of refreshing** and the return of Jesus Christ (v. 20).

The Rejection of the Offers | Acts 4-8

- The leaders instructed Peter to silence (4:18).
 - The believers responded by praying for the power of the Holy Spirit (4:29-33).
- The leaders put Peter and the others into prison (5:17-18).
 - An angel released them and instructed them to go and boldly proclaim in the Temple (5:19-20).
- Peter proclaims (yet again) the King and the Kingdom (5:27-32).
 - Even in the conviction of the Spirit, the leaders determine to kill the apostles (5:33).
- Stephen gave a powerful “offense” to the leaders of Israel, offering the Kingdom once again (7:1-53).
 - The sermon: Stephen carefully selects portions of Israel’s history to build a case that Jesus is Messiah:
 - Abraham (1-8) Joseph (9-16), Moses (17-43), David (44-50). This was followed by a concluding remark in vv. 51-53.
 - Each of these illustrations from Israel’s history have a common theme: a highly respected individual seemingly failed in their mission.
 - The purpose of these illustrations was to convince the nation that the death of Jesus was not an ultimate failure in the Messianic mission. Just as they placed confidence in these heroes of their history, they should place faith in Jesus.
 - The response: The leaders put Stephen to death (vv. 51-59) but Stephen prayed for the people to have more opportunity (v. 60).
- With the death of Stephen, God begins to work with Saul of Tarsus to be the recipient of a new work, never before seen in the pages of Scripture, and therefore called *the mystery*.
- The closing prayer of Stephen gives Israel continuing opportunities that last through the destruction of Jerusalem.