

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #69

2/13/2008

Following Armageddon Comes The Millennium: Part 5

19:21-20:10

In this lesson we see God offer the blessings of His rule through a fourth form of His Theocracy — **The Judges**. Before we consider the **Theocracy** known as the Judges, let us review those that precede it.

First, God offered the blessings of **His Theocracy** in the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden. The plan and purpose of **God's Theocracy** was successful and worked perfectly, as God had intended. As long as Adam and Eve accepted **God's Theocracy** and lived according to **His Sovereign Rule**, God was able to give to them the greatest blessings ever known to man. Only when Adam and Eve rejected **God's Theocracy** did the curse of pain, trauma, and death become a reality in God's creation, and so it has ever been since that time.

Second, following Adam's rejection of **God's Theocracy** in the Garden, God offered the blessings of **His Theocracy** to man in **the form of human government** (Genesis 9:1-7). In this form of **His Theocracy** God emphasized the value of human life. Man's primary specific assignment from God as He delegated His authority to man, is expressed in Genesis 9:5-6 where we read: *"...at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."* By this delegation of His authority, God sanctioned what is known today as capital punishment. Of course, man rejected **God's Theocracy**, selecting instead the rule of Satan through Nimrod and his successors.

Third, God called Abraham out of paganism and through him brought into existence a new nation of people through which God offered the blessings of **His Theocratic Rule**. As set forth and explained in the previous lesson, **God's Theocratic Rule** over this new nation of Israel has far-reaching aspects, reaching even unto **God's final Theocracy, the Millennial Kingdom**.

The uniqueness of God's Theocracy expressed through Israel can be seen in several distinctive and critical matters:

First, God gave Abraham three unconditional promises, known as covenants, by which He covenanted Himself to bless the descendants of Abraham known as the nation of Israel. These relate to (1) the promise of a national land; (2) the promise of a nation; (3) the promise that Israel would be a blessing to all mankind, enumerated in Genesis 12:1-3 and further explained and applied in Gen. 15:5-18; 17:1-9; 22:16-19.

Second, about four centuries after God had made His promises to Abraham, God used Moses to organize the descendants of Abraham into a nation at Mt. Sinai. The details of God's organization of His Chosen People

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS SHOULD BE FULFILLED**: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.**

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

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were given to Moses at Mt. Sinai and are recorded in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. *God's organization of this new nation, brought into existence by His sovereign actions, was uniquely designed to allow Him to pour out His blessings upon this special nation.* God's purpose was to have such a relationship with Israel that they would be a demonstration of how, through **His Theocracy**, He pours out His blessings on His highest creation, man. Through the application of **God's Theocratic** relationship with Israel, Israel would be enabled to enjoy the greatest blessings possible to any people on this earth; the entire world could witness the effectiveness of **God's Theocracy** applied to life, and God's true nature would be manifested before all of the world.

Third, to facilitate the functioning of **His Theocracy**, God gave Israel unique instructions about how they were to live, that by so living, they would allow Him to pour out His blessings on them. God told Moses and Israel that these commandments, statutes and judgments were so uniquely designed to facilitate the flow of His blessings that other nations, observing the blessed effect of these upon Israel, would be amazed at what they saw and desire to know Israel's God:

"Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deu. 4:6-8). *"And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts"* (Malchi 3:12). *"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God"* (Romans 3:1-2).

The function of God's Holy commandments was primarily to reflect the holy nature of God and to allow sinful man to be positioned to receive His blessings. They could be called "*instructions for successful living.*" They are so unique in their holiness that God promised blessings and success to all who live in obedience to them (Deuteronomy 4:2; 27:1-30:20; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 37:1-8; Proverbs 3:1-10).

Had Israel been submissive to the **Sovereign Rule of God** and lived according to His instructions, **His Theocratic Rule** over them would have resulted in great blessings and the most perfect society possible since Adam

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and Eve were expelled from Eden. God's plans for Israel as a nation and His desire to pour out His blessings upon them through **His Theocracy** have, for a time, have been rejected. However, because God made unconditional promises to Abraham to bless his descendants, the complete fulfillment of God's promises for the nation of Israel will come when God establishes **His Theocracy in His Millennial Kingdom**. Those who desire to better understand how life will be lived in the **Millennial Kingdom** can find their questions answered in what God intended for life to be like for Israel under **His Theocracy**, for they are God's instructions for the highest level of life possible on this earth, and that is what will be experienced in the **Millennial Kingdom**. Israel's rejection of **God's Theocracy** happened almost as soon as they received God's instructions through Moses (Exodus 32:1-35; Numbers 14:1-45; Judges 2:11-15) and leads us to the next expression of God's Theocracy.

Fourth, following Israel's rejection of His Theocratic Rule "the Lord raised up Judges." God summarizes how He used Judges as the representatives of **His Theocracy** and of how, once again, Israel rejected **His Rule** over them:

"Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died" (Judges 2:16-21).

Though the Israelites were scattered throughout the land and failed to function as the cohesive nation that God had organized at Mt. Sinai, the

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reality of **God's Theocracy** continued as He ruled through specific representatives He selected called Judges. Gideon, as one of the Judges God selected, expressed well his understanding that he functioned under God's delegation of authority as we see in Judges 8:22-23: *"Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."* God's commentary of the cause of the chaotic state of affairs that existed in Israel which resulted from their rejection of **His Theocracy** is found in the last verses of the book: *"And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes"* (Judges 21:24-25). Thus, God's desire to pour out His blessings upon Israel through the exercise of **His Theocratic Rule** was once again thwarted by Israel's rejection. As they rebelled against **His Rule**, choosing instead the anarchy which resulted from serving Satan under the guise of doing what each one of them wanted to do, Israel once again refused to accept God's blessings by rejecting **His Rule** over them.

Fifth, God's institution of a monarchical form of government was His next application of His Theocratic Rule over Israel. Samuel, considered to be the last of the Judges and the first of the prophets, bridges the gap between **God's Theocracy** expressed through the Judges and **His Theocracy** expressed through kings whom He selected.

Samuel was God's instrument, to whom He spoke directly and served as God's mouth to the people, expressing God's rule over them. However, the people, disheartened by the corruption of Samuel's sons, whom he had appointed as Judges (1 Samuel 8:3), and influenced by the Canaanites around them, desired a governmental structure more like what they observed in the nations surrounding them. It appears that it was God's preference to rule over His people directly through representatives like Samuel, for when the people demanded *"make us a king to judge us like other nations"* (1 Samuel 8:5), Samuel thought he was being rejected. However, God told Samuel that the people had rejected Him, not Samuel: *"And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them"* (1 Samuel 8:7). That the application of **God's Theocracy** through a government by kings was not God's preference for the people is clear in the warning God gave them about the abuses they would experience under such a form of government (1 Samuel 8:11-18).

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Consistent with what we have already seen, long before Israel rejected **His Sovereign Rule**, God knew it would happen. Therefore, even before He constituted Israel into a nation, God already had plans for using other means to offer the blessings of **His Theocracy** to His chosen people. Long before Samuel's time, God had told Abraham (Genesis 17:5-7) and Jacob (Gen. 35:11) that *"kings shall come out of thee."* God even used the mouth of the false prophet to tell of the king He would send to rule over His people: *"... there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel ..."* (Numbers 24:17). Samuel, though rejected by the people as God's judge over them, was God's instrument for God's transition for setting up **His Theocracy** through kings. Even though man's rebellion against God appears to thwart God's plans, God is sovereign over all and able to work His plans and purposes in spite of what sinful man chooses.

At the selection of Saul, even in the face of the rebellious decision of the people, God was still in charge and appointed Saul as King (1 Sam. 9:15-16; 12:13). With the institution of a monarchical form of government, God remained in control, choosing the individual who would actually sit upon the throne and directing him through His messenger-prophets. As is clear from the references cited above, knowing beforehand exactly how Israel would respond to **His Rule**, God worked His plans according to His purposes, plans that point towards His establishing **His Theocracy in His Monarchical Rule in His Millennial Kingdom**.

Saul had rebellion in his heart (1 Samuel 15:22-23), like unto Satan, and made himself unusable as God's representative and *"God sought a man after His own heart"* (1 Samuel 13:13-14). Using Samuel as His spokesman, God rejected King Saul and chose David to be King over Israel. Even with all of his faults and failures, David was a man *"after God's own heart"* because he understood and practiced submission to authority, thereby acknowledging the **Theocratic Rule of God**. God can deal with and forgive sin, especially when it is confessed and repented of (Psalm 51), but He cannot exercise His rule through a rebellious spirit for such a one always represents Satan. A rebellious person cannot represent God.

Because of David's submissiveness to God's authority, God chose him, and his throne, as a prophetic picture of His own eternal throne. Thus, David became the recipient of an eternal promise from God (2 Samuel 7:8-16; Psalm 89:29-37). His throne would not only be the seat of **God's Theocracy** over the nation of Israel at that time, but would also reach far into the future. The *"throne of David"* is a picture of the throne upon which the Messiah will sit when He establishes His eternal throne in **His Millennial Kingdom**.

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David's throne became so closely identified with the anticipated Messiah-King that both Matthew and Luke made sure that their genealogies traced Jesus' lineage back to David. Then, to make sure that there was no misunderstanding about the identity and role of Jesus in regard to **David's throne**, when the angel made his announcement to Mary, he so identified Jesus as the One to sit upon **David's throne**: ***“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”*** (Luke 1:31-33).

The Jews of Jesus' day correctly saw the **“throne of David”** and the kingdom over which that authority was to be asserted as being related to their Messiah-King. However, they failed to see either the eternal or the spiritual nature of that throne and the kingdom over which it reigned. The future fulfillment of **David's throne** as the seat of authority from which the Lord Jesus will reign over the nation of Israel as their Messiah-King in the perfect expression of **His Theocracy** will be in the **Millennial Kingdom**. Also, it will be in the **Millennial Kingdom** that we will see perfectly fulfilled one other aspect of our **Lord's Theocracy** which we will consider in our next session.