

**Revelation**  
**A Wednesday Night Bible Study**

Lesson #75  
3/19/2008

**Following Armageddon Comes the Millennium: Part 11**  
**19:21-20:10**

In our last lesson, as we focused on **God's New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah** which He tells us about in Jeremiah 31:31-37, we learned that this **New Covenant** will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. God pledged His own integrity in saying that He would never forsake the *"nation of Israel"* and that **"the seed of Israel would never cease from being a nation before Him forever."** Even as we saw that this *"New Covenant"* which God makes is with the *"house of Israel and the house of Judah"* we also noted that it contains a prophetic precursor to **our Lord's last Theocracy on this earth prior to the Millennial Kingdom.** This last Theocracy on this earth prior to the Millennial Kingdom is **our Lord's Spiritual Theocracy**, often described in the Gospels as either *"the kingdom of heaven"* or *"the kingdom of God."*

In this lesson we shall begin to study and examine our **Lord's Spiritual Theocracy.** We shall see that some of what we have studied about God's relationship with the nation of Israel presents *"parables," "shadows"* or *"patterns"* of this **Spiritual Theocracy.** When we closely examine some passages in the book of Hebrews we find these very words used to describe how the practices of Israel, given to them by God, were precursors to what is found in the Spiritual Theocracy.

As we review Jesus' seemingly interchangeable use of the phrases *"the kingdom of heaven,"* only in Matthew, and *"the kingdom of God,"* in the other Gospels, we learn what Jesus says **His Spiritual Theocracy is like** for time after time Jesus used one of the two phrases and said *"the kingdom is like ..."* Furthermore, we learn from Jesus own teachings, and then from what the Holy Spirit tells us through Paul, **how a person becomes a citizen of this Spiritual Theocracy.** We learn the **things that characterize the life of the citizens in this kingdom or Spiritual Theocracy.** We discover from the very own words of our Lord, and from those written down by both Paul, Peter and John, how **some unique relationships exist between the nation of Israel and this Spiritual Theocracy and that it is identified as the "body of Christ" or "the church."** As you can imagine, the examination of **such concepts and aspects of this Spiritual Theocracy** will require some study and time and more than one lesson. Therefore, if your questions are not addressed immediately perhaps they will be before we complete this section of study. Suffice it to say that, of all that we have studied thus far about these various **Theocracies**, this one will be the most relevant one to our situation today.

Please keep in mind that, as we examine this Spiritual Theocracy, we are learning, first about **the Millennial Kingdom** and, secondly about what heaven is like. This is one reason Jesus used the phrases *"the kingdom of heaven"* and *"the kingdom of God"* to describe **His Spiritual Theocracy** for He was actually telling us what heaven is like.

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As we move now to considering our **Lord's Spiritual Theocracy**, we do it fully aware that the Jews of His day so obsessively desired for Him to set up an earthly kingdom (John 6:15; 18:33-37) that they were not receptive to what He said about what He came to do, i.e., to set up His **Spiritual Kingdom** on this earth. In studying **Jesus' Spiritual Theocracy** we will see a convergence of many of the significant factors of all of the previous manifestations of **Theocracy** being brought forth and fulfilled in this **Spiritual Theocracy**.

That Jesus came to establish a **Spiritual Theocracy** is undeniably clear when we simply consider the specific words chosen both by Him and His forerunner, John the Baptist. The words, *"the kingdom of heaven"* and *"the kingdom of God,"* appear as interchangeable phrases and are used more than any other phrase in the Gospels with *"the kingdom of heaven"* being used 116 times in Matthew and *"the kingdom of God"* being used 202 times in the four Gospels.

Note the emphasis on *"kingdom."* Of course a *"kingdom"* must have a king and Jesus came as a King to establish **God's Rule in His Kingdom on earth** over those who agreed to become subjects in **His Kingdom**. When John the Baptist was preparing for the coming of Jesus, he said: *"Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:1). When Jesus began to preach He said the same thing: *"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 4:17).

In our study we need to be aware of a serious error of misinterpretation regarding **Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom** on earth. That error is propagated by those of the Amillennialist view point of interpretation — rejecting the idea of a literal thousand-year reign of Christ upon the earth, which we call **the Millennial Kingdom**, they substitute **Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom** in its place. This results in a double injustice — (1) *rejecting the reality of the Millennial Kingdom* and (2) *Misunderstanding the role of Jesus' Spiritual Theocracy*. Added to the error of the Amillennialists is the lack of other Bible students to properly emphasize **the role of the Spiritual Theocracy** which Jesus came to establish. This **results in a lack of proper focus on Jesus as the King and Ruler of the Kingdom**, even though Bible students have rightly emphasized Jesus as Savior.

Mark's account of Jesus' first presentation of His message helps us to see the proper emphasis: *"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel"* (Mark 1:14-15). The account in Mark

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differs only slightly from the account in Matthew, using the phrase *“kingdom of God,”* whereas Matthew used *“kingdom of heaven,”* illustrating that the phrases were used interchangeably, but there is one more significant difference. Mark’s account also tells us that *“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”* While a great deal of attention has been given to the necessity for man *“to repent,”* little attention has been given to this repentance in relationship to *“the kingdom.”* [It should be noted that some manuscripts omit the words *“of the kingdom”* from verse 14]. Some, such as Dr. J. Vernon McGee, see the two phrases *“the kingdom of heaven”* and *“the kingdom of God”* as having two entirely different applications with *“... of heaven”* meaning “God’s rule over the earth” and *“... of God”* meaning “His entire universe, even beyond the bounds of this earth.”

Regardless of whether or not that phrase should be used in our translations it seems obvious that both John and Jesus were referring to the purpose of Jesus coming as the establishment of **“His Kingdom”** over which He rules as King. As such, the call *“to repent”* should be seen as not only a recognition of sin and turning from it, but also a turning from serving Satan as one’s king to serving Jesus as King.

When Jesus sent forth His disciples He told them *“to preach the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:2). The correlative passage in Matthew 10:1-15 elaborates further on Jesus’ commission to them: *“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils ...”* (Mat. 10:1,7,8). Here we see that Jesus specifically empowered His disciples to proclaim **“His Kingdom”** and to exercise His authority to set the people free from their bondage resulting from serving Satan. It was a direct confrontation, where the authority and rule of Jesus was being exercised against the rule of Satan. Yes, Jesus came to set men free from sin, but what was involved in this has not been sufficiently emphasized. He did this when He established His Kingdom in the hearts of men and to accomplish this He had to defeat Satan and his rule over men. Consider the God’s explanation in Hebrews 2:14-15: *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Jesus further emphasized this meaning when He said *“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you”* (Mat. 12:28; Luke 11:20).

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To the highly respected Jewish religious teacher, Nicodemus, Jesus said: *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3,5). For Nicodemus, and all others, entrance into *“the Kingdom of God”* required a new life, one received by the Holy Spirit from heaven.

To all of His listeners, He said: *“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 18:3). Notice the two requirements listed by Jesus — *“conversion,”* which means a total change from one nature and servitude unto another, and *“become as little children,”* the humbling, honesty required by Jesus with no pride or pretense allowed for those who would become citizens in **“His Kingdom.”** In relationship to this, Jesus also said: *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God”* (Matt. 19:23-24). Notice, that, here in one verse, Jesus used the phrase *“kingdom of heaven”* and in the next statement, *“the kingdom of God.”* His emphasis, following almost immediately upon His comments about *“becoming as a little child,”* obviously ties the two thoughts together. Humility, simplicity, and honesty are the ingredients He emphasizes. The invitation from Jesus is clear — to become a citizen of **“His Kingdom”** requires a total change in nature, such as could only be experienced by receiving a new life by the Holy Spirit from heaven, and a total change in allegiance to the one whom a person serves.

After the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower and direct the believers at Pentecost, the disciples went about preaching *“the kingdom of God.”* In 102 verses in the book of Acts we find that they used the name of Jesus and associated it with the word **“LORD,”** indicating that, not only was He their **“LORD and KING,”** but that also if any other person desired to become a citizen in **“His Kingdom”** and receive His blessings, then that person would have to acknowledge Jesus as **“LORD.”** In the chaotic moments of the Philippian earthquake when the jailor cried out for help in how to be saved, Paul replied, *“Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts 16:31). This is certainly consistent with what Paul said in his letter to the church at Rome when he wrote: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;*

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*and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:9-13).*

What we find in these few references about the use of the word **“LORD”** as a title for Jesus is only a very small sampling. Having noted that 102 times in the Book of Acts **“LORD”** is used as the proper title for Jesus, we note that 257 times Paul uses it in his letters. It should be abundantly clear that to become a citizen of our **“LORD’S KINGDOM,”** a Christian and a member of His body, the church, one’s belief must also include a submission to Him as **“LORD AND KING.”** That means that the life such a citizen of HIS KINGDOM lives on this earth is lived under His sovereign authority and in obedience to His commands. It is a life that is unashamedly in submission to Him as He so clearly stated in Matthew 10:32-33: *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”*

However, let all who would so profess Him as their **“LORD AND KING”** be forewarned — He knows the difference between those who truly submit to Him and those who only pretend to do so. In John 2:23-25 we read: *“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men; And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”*

He does not accept the fraudulent manipulative adoration of men as is noted in John 6:15: *“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.”* He is not fooled when men merely mouth the right words as is seen in Matthew 7:21-23: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”* Don’t try to play games with or deceive Jesus. A person may easily fool others, but he will never fool Jesus.