

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #76
4/02/2008

Following Armageddon Comes the Millennium: Part 12
19:21-20:10

In the previous lesson we began to consider our **Lord's Spiritual Kingdom, His Spiritual Theocracy** and what we know as **His Spiritual Body, His Church**. He came in the Person of His Spirit to indwell His new body at Pentecost and to establish the Kingdom He had proclaimed during His earthly ministry. In today's lesson we shall continue focusing on this same **Spiritual Theocracy**, attempting to gain further understanding of it as well as seeing some very interesting similarities between it and the **New Covenant** that God promised Israel, which is to be fulfilled in **the Millennial Kingdom**.

Jesus had sent His disciples out proclaiming that it was time for the people to **"repent for the Kingdom of God (heaven) was at hand."** Men were invited to become subjects in His Kingdom by submitting to Him as their **Lord, Master, King and Savior**. We further saw how the title **Lord** was an essential part of the preaching of Paul, Peter and the other early evangelists as they invited men to become subjects in His Kingdom. They did not merely invite men **"to believe"** on Jesus. Their invitation always was to **"believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved,"** thus stressing His authority and the believer's willing submission to that authority. This is because Jesus came to establish a **Kingdom** over which He is to rule as Lord, Master and King and **His Kingdom** is in direct conflict with the kingdom of Satan from which men are set free when they agree to submit to His rule in their lives.

Last week's lesson was concluded by focusing on some things that are required of any person who desires to become a subject in **Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom** and live under **His Theocracy**:

- 1) **Repentance** — One must repent of his sinfulness and of being a sinner, that is of being as servant of Satan in rebellion against the rule of Christ. When the call to repentance was issued it was because **"the kingdom of God was at hand,"** clearly setting God's rule in conflict with Satan's rule.
- 2) **Conversion** — Those who become subjects in our Lord's Spiritual Kingdom must experience conversion, that is, become new people with new natures, natures that come directly from God in heaven. This was clearly seen in the conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus where He told him, **"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). Several times Jesus said, **"... Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into**

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the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Because this is such an important factor and so little understood, we will pursue it more in this current lesson.

- 3) Public Profession — Those who submit themselves to the rule of Jesus must publicly declare their allegiance to Him. He has no secret disciples. The decision to submit to Jesus' rule is made in the privacy of the heart, but must be declared openly as one chooses between the kingdoms of Jesus and Satan. Jesus clearly asserted this when He said, *"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."* (Matthew 10:32-33).

As we examine the similarities which exist between God's *"new covenant"* with Israel and the critical aspects of becoming a citizen in Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom we notice some very interesting things. In Jeremiah 31:33 God said, *"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."* This *"new covenant"* replaces the one made in Exodus 24:1-8 between God and the people regarding their submission to His authority expressed in His commandments. The *"new covenant"* of Jeremiah 31 will be fulfilled in the life of Israel in the **Millennial Kingdom** and specifically applies to the nation of Israel.

However, in the book of Hebrews, we note that the principles of what God promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31:33 also apply to those who become subjects in **Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom**. A number of times in Hebrews (8:5;9:8,23; 10:1) God used words such as *"shadow," "patterns"* and *"figure"* to tell us that what was seen here on earth was a *"shadow of heavenly things."* As we read the lengthy passage beginning in Hebrews 6:13 we find God explaining how those things which were associated with the *"old covenant"* of Exodus were limited in what they could accomplish, but contained germs of heavenly truth which are to be fulfilled later in a *"new covenant."*

"For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:7-8). Then, in Heb. 8:10 we find Jeremiah 31:33 quoted with the following summation of the paragraph reading, *"In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away"* (Heb. 8:13).

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With these “*shadows*,” “*patterns*” and “*figures*” God tells us what heaven is like. Consider the following statements from God about the priests and the sacrifices they offered:

“Who serve unto THE EXAMPLE AND SHADOW OF HEAVENLY THINGS, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5). *“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary ... And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all ... Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”* (Heb. 9:1-5) *“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: WHICH WAS A FIGURE FOR THE TIME THEN PRESENT”* (Heb. 9:8-9). *“It was therefore necessary that THE PATTERNS OF THINGS IN THE HEAVENS should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are THE FIGURES OF THE TRUE; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us”* (Heb. 9:23-24). *“For the law having A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME, and NOT THE VERY IMAGE OF THE THINGS, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect”* (Heb. 10:1).

Repeatedly and emphatically, God uses various metaphors to tell us that the elements of the Mosaic system were earthly expressions of “*heavenly things*,” things that exist in heaven. They were “*shadows*” and a shadow is simply an indication that something more substantive exists, though it is not that thing itself. A “*pattern*” is a tracing of something else that is reproduced. The “*figure*” in Heb. 9:9 is actually from the Greek word **parabole** or parable. Things in heaven are of a spiritual, eternal nature. They are of such nature that they cannot fit on this earth or be exhibited here in this material, temporal place. Furthermore, our minds are unable to grasp and comprehend the things of heaven. Paul, in writing about his “*being caught up into paradise, into the third heaven*,” said that he “*heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter*” (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

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First, Paul said he heard “*unspeakable words,*” words *he did not have the ability to utter*. **Second**, he said he heard “*unspeakable words,*” meaning that, even if he did have the ability to utter them, he was not allowed to utter them. The mind of man lacks the ability to comprehend heaven and, even if man could comprehend heaven, man does not have a vocabulary that can describe the things of heaven. Therefore, God has used these symbolic expressions to tell us what heaven is like, but He has done even more than that.

Jesus came to establish “*the kingdom of heaven*” on this earth. When He establishes **His Millennial Kingdom**, it will be like heaven on this earth. As we said in the beginning of this lesson, there are a number of interesting similarities between these two kingdoms, **Jesus’ Spiritual Theocracy and Jesus’ Millennial Kingdom**. We shall simply list some of these similarities now and later clarify and expound upon them more.

First, both Kingdoms are Theocracies in which Jesus rules as King. In **His Spiritual Theocracy**, He rules in the hearts of men. In **His Millennial Kingdom**, He rules on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

Second, in both Kingdoms, the subjects have natures polluted with and distorted by sin. In the **Spiritual Theocracy**, the redeemed citizen still has a “carnal nature” (Rom. 7:14-25) and the subjects in **the Millennial Kingdom** have entered that Kingdom in their natural, sin-diseased bodies.

Third, in both Kingdoms, the subjects have new natures, have been converted and have God’s law written in their hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31-37; Hebrews 6:13-10:22).

Fourth, though, in both Kingdoms, the citizens have sin-natures, they have been given the freedom, ability and power to please God and serve Him rather than being in bondage to Satan.

During **the Millennial Kingdom**, Satan is restricted from appealing to the sin-natures of the citizens, separated from them and restrained in the bottomless pit by God. **In the Spiritual Kingdom**, the citizens have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit Who exercises all of His power over Satan as He enables the converted citizen to reject Satan’s seductions and choose submission to his Lord and King (James 1:12-15; 4:1-10).

Fifth, a temple is present in both Kingdoms. In the **Millennial Kingdom** the temple is in Jerusalem. In the **Spiritual Kingdom**, each citizen is the temple of God (Ezekiel 41:1-44:31; 1 Corinthians 6:19).

Recognizing that it is not sufficient to simply list these amazing similarities, we shall continue our efforts to delve into their meanings in future lessons.