

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #77
4/09/2008

Following Armageddon Comes the Millennium: Part 13
19:21-20:10

The last lesson concluded with a list of some of the similarities between **Jesus' Spiritual Theocracy and Jesus' Millennial Kingdom**. These similarities, which we simply listed before, are:

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 subjects still have 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 dual natures, though they retain their natural, sin-diseased natures, they have now been converted and have God's law written in their hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31-37; Hebrews 6:13-10:22; Romans 7:14-25).

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.

In the Spiritual Kingdom, the subjects have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit Who exercises all of His power over Satan as He enables the converted subjects to reject Satan's seductions and choose submission to his Lord and King (James 1:12-15; 4:1-10). 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.

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

Also, in previous lessons we have seen that our **Lord's Spiritual Theocracy**, what Jesus calls *"the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God,"* refers to His rule in the hearts of men here on this earth. It was what both He and John the Baptist came preaching when they said, *"Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Mat. 4:17).

Not only did Jesus call for men to *"repent,"* but He also said that *"Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter in"* (Luke 18:17) as He emphasized how important it was for those who would become citizens of His Kingdom to be both humble, or broken in the spirit of pride, and honest, without any pretense. He told Nicodemus that *"... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born*

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of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:3,5-7). Having proclaimed the necessity of repentance and having stressed the importance of humility and honesty, and having told Nicodemus that he *“had to be born again,”* Jesus tells us that a person must both *“repent”* and receive a new nature from heaven, i.e., be converted to enter into His Kingdom.

Among the similarities between the **two Kingdoms**, the **Spiritual** and the **Millennial**, which we have listed is that the subjects of each have new natures with God's law written in their hearts, but they also have natural, carnal bodies. That is, they have been converted and received a new nature but that nature must live in a body that is still carnal with a sin nature. That presents a much bigger challenge for those who are subjects of the **Spiritual Kingdom** than it does for those who are subjects of the **Millennial Kingdom**. Those in the **Millennial Kingdom** do not have to deal with the temptations of Satan because Jesus will have restrained him in *“the bottomless pit”* and will not allow him to have access to the **Kingdom**. In Romans seven Paul gives expression to the situation faced by the subjects of the **Spiritual Kingdom** when he writes about how their spiritual nature has to struggle with their carnal nature and says:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:18-19, 24-25).

Furthermore, he wrote in Galatians 5:17: *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

For the subjects of the **Spiritual Kingdom** it is best understood in this manner — when God converts the sinner, giving him a new nature from heaven, He puts that new nature in the person's old body which still has a carnal or fleshly nature, which he will have as long as he lives on this earth. To get into heaven from the **Spiritual Kingdom** he has to either die or be raptured so he can leave that old carnal, fleshly, sinful body behind. God tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:50 *“... that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (that is heaven); neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”* Flesh and blood do not belong in heaven, not only because

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heaven has a different nature, but also because the body of flesh and blood is a sinful body and cannot enter God's presence in heaven.

As bad as it may seem to the person who becomes a subject of **Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom** that he has to be engaged in this struggle, God has a valid purpose in it. The rule of Christ is internal, in the heart of man. It cannot be seen outwardly, but Jesus has designed a way for those who are truly subjects of **His Kingdom** here to validate themselves for there have always been those who have falsely claimed to be subjects, but were actually only pretenders. Jesus spoke of those when He said:

“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” (Matthew 7:21-23).

Paul referred to such when he wrote *“... the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”* (1 Cor. 4:20). Just because a person verbally professed Jesus did not mean that he actually belonged to Jesus and had become a subject in His Kingdom. God separates His true subjects from the pretenders by various *“trials”* and circumstances in life. Each person's inner reality is expressed outwardly as he responds to these *“trials”* in which he proves his true nature. James, the half-brother of Jesus wrote about this:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:2,12-15).

The Greek word for *“temptations”* is the same as for *“tried.”* The word refers to the various circumstances which a person confronts in life. When a converted subject of the Kingdom of God, who has been *“born again”* and received God's nature from heaven, confronts a *“trial,”* he is being tested for his validity and proves himself to be a genuine subject. When one who pretends to be a subject, but has not been converted, is confronted with the same circumstances, the *“trial”* becomes a *“temptation”* be-

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cause, governed by the sinful lust of his unregenerate nature, he is attracted to the temptation and proves that he is not a subject of God's Kingdom.

While it is easily possible for those who pretend to be subjects of the **Kingdom**, those who have only a given verbal profession and acted out the role of a subject, to fool other people, they cannot fool themselves or God. Even among the twelve disciples of Jesus there was one who fooled all of the rest, but he did not fool Jesus. That is why Jesus said the following:

“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matthew 16:21-28).

Notice that Jesus was speaking to all of His disciples and He defined His followers as those who died to self. Dying to one's ego, one's self, is a requirement for entrance into **Jesus' Spiritual Kingdom** and it must precede physical death or one cannot enter God's Eternal Kingdom, heaven. Jesus concluded His statement by saying: *“Verily I say unto you, There be SOME standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom.”* Jesus said *“**SOME STANDING HERE**”* because among the disciples was one who would not see *“...the Son of man coming in His Kingdom.”* That man was Judas who was just a pretender. He had verbally professed to be a follower of Jesus ... he had played the role of one who believed in Jesus, but he had never died to self. The others did receive Jesus into their hearts as their King — they saw Him *“coming in His Kingdom”* — and became citizens and subjects of **His kingdom**, but not Judas. Apparently, there have been lots of people like Judas down through the years, and even today there are surely some among us now.

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Jesus tells us that this will be the case. In Matthew 13 Jesus tells some parables about *“the kingdom of heaven”* and introduces them all by saying: *“... Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given”* (Matt. 13:11). Examining these parables we find the following:

| Parable | Reference | Meaning |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1. The Sower | 13:18-23 | The Gospel of the Kingdom is received only by a minority of people |
| 2. The Wheat & The Tares | 13:24-30 36-43 | The enemy sows pretenders among the genuine subjects of the Kingdom |
| 3. The Mustard Seed | 13:31-32 | The Kingdom appears to grow rapidly, but in it will be pretenders |
| 4. The Yeast | 13:33-35 | Pretenders will affect the Kingdom |
| 5. The Hidden Treasure | 13:44 | Israel is a hidden part of the Kingdom |
| 6. The Pearl | 13:45-46 | Christ suffered for His Kingdom |
| 7. The Net | 13:47-52 | Angels will separate the pretenders from the genuine at the judgment |

Notice that at least four of the parables picture a co-mingling of the pretenders with the genuine subjects of the **Kingdom**. Their outward characteristics are so similar to those of the genuine subjects that only God and His angels are able to separate them, but the fact of their presence is real and undeniable.

While men may not always be able to distinguish the false from the true, God tells us that those with certain specific characteristics and life-styles *“shall not inherit the Kingdom of God”* (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5). Added to those who possess the characteristics listed in these passages are those whose lives are so perverted and enslaved by sin that God has *“given them up”* to reap the consequences of their rebellion (Romans 1:24,26,28). Finally, God gives a list of people in Revelation 21:8 and 27 who will not be allowed into heaven, but are cast into *“the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.”* Among the characteristics given in these last two verses God focuses on those who are *“liars.”* It is fitting because for one to successfully pretend that he belongs to Jesus, as Judas was able to do, he must be an accomplished and habitual *“liar,”* one who not only lies to others and to God, but also to himself. It is an especially dangerous and fearful characteristic for such a one dooms himself to hell while pretending to be a subject of the Lord Jesus Christ.