

## **Revelation, Part 30**

As we continue our study of the Kingdom/Millennium, this session we will be looking at the character of its government. The government of the millennium will be a theocracy with Jesus Christ reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords, as man and as God. Some argue that the government will be a republic, but a theocracy is not a republic because the legislative, judicial, and executive power are not lodged in the people governed, but rather in God the King. Nor is it a monarchy in the usual sense but a monarchy in the highest sense. Yet in some ways, it contains some of the elements of both a monarchy and a Republic.

It resembles a monarchy in that absolute sovereignty is vested in the King, and everyone else is subject to that authority. It resembles a republic in that it preserves the rights of the individual from the highest to the lowest, hence, it is a perfect combination of the two systems. A monarchy under divine direction, thus infallible, brings in all the blessings that would come from a well-directed republican form of government, but with none of the negatives associated with man's depravity. It is a theocracy not as a convenience, but rather as an absolute necessity. It is a form of government honorable to both man and God.

### **How the Plan of God works.**

In the garden, God set up a theocracy exercising His dominion over Earth through the mediatorial administration of a man, Adam. Because of his disobedience, Adam forfeited rulership to Satan. As a result, man corrupted himself and ultimately his environment losing the capacity to rule righteously. This rendered Earth suitable only for Satan and a fallen depraved man but not for God. This corrupted status of both man and his environment, with this lost dominion, requires redemption. God must restore what was once properly His to a status that is acceptable to Him, and in the process, restore dominion to Himself. God resolved to accomplish that through the work of Jesus Christ. God's preferred form of government is a theocracy and, if it is not restored, that makes His proposed government a failure. If Satan can prevent this restoration, he wins a strategic victory over God.

God sent His Son to make provisions for redemption. This includes the redeeming of both fallen man and corrupted Earth. God intends to restore

both man and His possession, Earth, to their original uncorrupted status. This will be done through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. That redemptive work will not be completed until Jesus Christ, as the Second Adam, exercises His sovereign rulership over a restored earth and its inhabitants in the form of a theocracy.

Until this theocracy is re-established under the rulership of Christ, the human race is not brought into full subjection to God. Once this theocracy is established, man is brought into full subjection to God, and Earth is returned to its pristine status of the Garden. Thus, the Kingdom Age or Millennium is the culmination of God's redemptive plan for man. Furthermore, the culmination of this redemptive plan in the form of the Theocratic Kingdom enables and guarantees redeemed man's eternal relationship with God.

This does not, for a moment, suggest that the work of Christ on the Cross is somehow incomplete. That was the redemptive act that makes all else possible. Without the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, there could be no redemption for man and no Kingdom. The redemption of fallen individuals who trust in Christ is complete in the work of Christ on the Cross, and there is NOTHING that must be added to complete that, no action by God, no action by man, tetelastai—it is finished. The redemptive plan for mankind and Earth is not finalized until the Theocratic Kingdom is set up.

### **The Messiah as King in the Millennium.**

Scripture makes it clear that the government of the Millennium is under the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 2:2-4; 9:3-7; 11:1-10; 16:5; 24:21-23; 31:4-32:2; 42:1-7; 13; 49:1-7; 51:4-5; 60:12; Dan. 2:44; 7:15-28; Obed. 17-21; Micah 4:1-8; 5:2-5; 15; Zeph. 3:9-10; 18-19; Zech. 9:10-15; 14:16-17). The genealogies of the NT firmly establish that Jesus is of the line of David. With our Lord's position as the Son of David firmly established, His right to David's throne under the Davidic Covenant is also established. Let's look at a few seemingly conflicting passages.

**Jer 30:9** But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

**Ezek 34:23** And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their

shepherd. 24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it

**Ezek 37:24** And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever: and my servant David shall be their prince forever.

**Hosea 3:5** Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

At first glance, we see these references to David, as king, to be referring to the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, but after closer examination, we see the passages are referring to two entities: David as King and our Lord. We also find references to David as King in Isa 55:3-4; Jer. 30:9; 33:15, 17, 20-21; Amos 9:11. The references to both the Lord, meaning Jesus Christ, and David's ruling are a bit confusing. There is no question that Jesus Christ will reign as King. The question is will He reign over Palestine directly or indirectly through a regent? These passages would suggest that Jesus rules Palestine through a regent—David. As might be expected, there are several views on this issue.

One is that the term "David" is used typically and refers to Christ. This is based on the fact that there are many prophetic references to Christ sitting on David's throne, thus, these references must apply to Christ. Arguments against that: Christ is never called David, he is called the Branch of David, Son of David, Seed of David, Root of David, but never David. "My servant David" is used repeatedly for the historical David, yet in the verses we just looked at, Jehovah is made distinct from references to David.

References to a "prince" preclude this being Christ the King.

**Ezek. 46:2** And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall

worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

If this were Christ, He would not be making sacrifices to Himself or acts of worship.

Another interpretation is that David refers to a literal son of David who will sit on David's throne. This version recognizes that Christ cannot do all the things concerning this "prince," and holds that it will be fulfilled by a human of the physical line of David reigning as regent of Palestine under Christ. References in Jeremiah 33:15 (above) and verses 17, 21-23 seem to support this view. Objections: no Jew can trace his lineage back to David, but that would not be impossible for God to do. If another must come AFTER Christ, then Christ is not the complete fulfillment of the Davidic promise. Lastly, a literal translation demands that "David," used in these verses, means exactly that—David.

A third interpretation is a literal interpretation. It holds that "David" is literally David himself. We know he will be resurrected along with the Tribulation martyrs and OT believers at the Second Advent and will be present in the Kingdom in his resurrection body. This is consistent with the principle of the literal interpretation of the Bible. David alone could sit as a regent in the Millennium without violating passages concerning David's reign. Resurrected saints are to have positions of responsibility in the Millennium as a reward for faithfulness (Mat 19:28; Luke 19:12-27). David might well be appointed such responsibility, as he is "a man after God's own heart".

The conclusion is that in the Millennium, David, in a resurrection body, will be appointed a regent over Palestine and will rule over that land as a prince, thus he might lead in worship, offer memorial sacrifices, divide land allotted to him among his faithful seed, all without violating his position in resurrection. So we have Christ as the theocratic King reigning over all, and we have King David in resurrection body as regent over Israel.

But there are more positions to be filled in this theocratic government. Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords is sovereign over a number of subordinate rulers.

**Isa 32:1** Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

**Ezek 45:8** ... And my princes shall no more oppress my people, but they shall let the house of Israel have the land according to their tribes.

**Matt 19:28** And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Authority over the twelve tribes of Israel will be vested in the hands of the twelve disciples. There will be positions of responsibility and rulership under the authority of Christ as King.

**Luke 19:12** He said, therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13 Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ 15 When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. 16 The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ 17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ 18 And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’ 19 And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ 20 Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ 22 He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’ 24 And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ 25 And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minas!’ 26 ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken

away. 27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.’ ”

A mina is about 300 shekels. Authority will be appointed to some individuals to be over ten cities and five cities in the Millennium. They evidently will be responsible to the head of the tribe (apostles), who will be responsible to David, who will be responsible to Christ. Such positions will be awarded for faithfulness.

**Isa. 40:10** Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, And His recompense before Him.

**Zech. 3:7** “Thus says the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.”

**Rev 20:4** Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Those in resurrection bodies in the Millennium are said to reign with Him for a thousand years. Positions of authority will be given as a reward.

### **Judges will be raised up.**

The word “rule” my house in Zech 3:7 above is *diyyn* and means to judge, plead, or contend.

**Isa. 1:28** “Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that, you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city.”

**1 Cor 6:2** Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Judges will be divinely appointed just as was done under the system of judges in Israel before King Saul. All these judges, princes, rulers, and governors will be resurrected believers who are the only ones with the capacity for righteousness that will be demanded by the Theocratic Kingdom. Resurrected believers are in their glorified state, without a sinful nature, have been declared righteous, and clothed in white linen to signify their purity in their resurrection bodies. They will be the only ones qualified for such positions of authority in this perfect Kingdom.

There is some question about to whom this authority is given. What we have seen here, I believe, pertains mostly to Israelites having authority over Israelites. There is no question that authority will be given to those of both the OT and the Church who have been faithful to God and whose spiritual lives have glorified Him. I believe there will be some degree of segregation. Jews will be responsible for Jews and Gentiles will be responsible for Gentiles.

One last point we need to cover is the universal aspect of this administration.

**Dan 2:35** “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

**Dan 6:14** “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

**Zech 9:10** And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

This theocratic government will be completely universal. No place on earth will not be covered by it. Every man, woman, and child will be under its authority. All authority will come down from Christ to the lowest administrative official in the remotest corner of the earth. No more nations, no more nationalities, we will be truly one nation under God.

## **Kingdom Government - The Rod of Iron**

**Psalm 2:1** Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed:

3 “Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us!”

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury:

6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.

8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.

9 ‘Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.’

**Rev. 2:26** The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

**Rev 12:1** And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. 5 She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to

his throne, 6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

**Rev. 19:15** From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

What is the meaning of this "rod of iron" (sometimes translated as "iron scepter")?

**Ps 23:4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 23 is the song of a shepherd written by David. The "rod" is *rhabdos*. It is used to guide sheep and protect them. The rod conveys the concept of authority, power, discipline, and defense of the sheep. The fact that it is made of iron here implies strictness.

Two commentators put it this way:

- To rule with an iron scepter or rod of iron is not to rule with a harsh and tyrannical sway, but with power that is firm and invincible. It denotes a government of strength, or one that cannot be successfully opposed; one in which the subjects are effectually subdued.
- With a rod of iron—With irresistible power, employed on those only who will not otherwise submit; who will hereby be dashed in pieces—Totally conquered.

The "rod of iron" is symbolic of the level of compliance to the King required during the Kingdom. It implies strict and unquestioning obedience to God's will in every action, manner, and thought. Disobedience will not be tolerated.

## **How is this possible?**

Important points to understand about the Millennium or Kingdom Age:

- Jesus will rule the Millennium or Kingdom Age with "a rod of iron" characterized by a return to strict compliance with God's Will.
- At the start of the Kingdom Age, Satan will be bound and cast into the Abyss, a compartment of Hades, for 1,000 years, thus, Satan will have no direct influence on mankind during the Kingdom Age.

The Kingdom Age is characterized by a return to the conditions of the Garden before the fall of Adam and is described as a “perfect environment”! But there are two main differences between the Garden before the fall and the Kingdom Age: while Satan is locked up during the Kingdom/Millennium and unable to influence mankind, however, unlike in the Garden, in the Kingdom Age fallen people in their natural bodies with fully developed sin natures will be present. Understanding these two differences helps a great deal in understanding the administration of justice in the Kingdom Age.

In the Garden before the fall, man did not have a sin nature. Adam and the woman were created perfect and without the knowledge of sin and were, thus, positioned by God to rule Earth righteously. Instead, they chose to disobey their Creator and do what He specifically told them NOT to do. They faced judgment and were expelled from the Garden. With this knowledge of sin, man is disobedient by nature and must make an effort to control that nature. Control of man's sin nature comes from only two sources:

1. Self-control which is only marginally effective.
2. Divine enablement through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is using the granted power resources of the HS to meet God's perfect standard. This power source is available ONLY to born-again believers and only those who are in the right-relationship with God.

“Right relationship” means -

- Free of sin through the practice of rebound, confessing your sins privately to God.
- Yielding your will to God's will—otherwise, you will be right back out in a state of carnality.
- Trusting (having faith) that God, through the Third Person of the Trinity, the HS) will provide the power to have victory over sin and temptation. This is called "walking in the Spirit" or "filled with the Spirit”.

Without the divine enablement of the HS, true victory over the sin nature is impossible, therefore, the unbeliever is doomed to failure based on the weakness of his self-control. Jesus, in hypostatic union, undiminished deity, and true humanity, demonstrated this divine system during His earthly ministry. He did all He did by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, all the miracles, enduring the Cross, and His resurrection. He did not use His deity but relied on the Holy Spirit instead. He proved the system

we call the "spiritual life" worked exactly as advertised. Jesus test-drove the spiritual life and left it for us to use, thus, we cannot say that victory over sin and temptation is impossible.

Through a succession of ages or dispensations, God systematically dismantled all of man's arguments for finding righteousness apart from God.

- Righteousness will not come as a result of your conscience being pained—The Age of Conscience proved that.
- Contrary to what some believe, the government can't produce righteousness—The Age of Human Government proved that.
- The promise of future blessings didn't produce righteousness—The Age of Promise proved that.
- The Law and its merit system of blessing and discipline did not produce a righteous people—The Age of Israel proved that.
- But the indwelling of the HS in the Church Age did produce a level of righteousness among those who used the provisions of the spiritual life. But the vast majority of mankind rejected that truth.

The argument can be put forth, "If God were here, then everyone would obey, right?" The Kingdom Age/Millennium will be God's final dispensation whereby He will prove that His way is the right way and the only way. Man is nothing apart from Him.

During the Kingdom Age, there will be real and visible proof of God's existence and presence in the daily lives of mankind. During the Kingdom, like the Church Age, believers will have the divine enablement of the indwelling Holy Spirit, thus, the Kingdom Age will be like both the Age of Israel and the Church Age—a combination of a demand for obedience to God's ordinances but with the grace provisions of the spiritual life.

In the Garden before the fall, Satan was loose and free to attempt to influence man. During the Kingdom Age, Satan is "bound up". We know from our previous studies in Revelation 20 that Satan is bound and cast into the abyss at the Second Advent, which precedes the Kingdom Age. Satan was free to influence mankind in the Garden. That ability is removed during the Kingdom Age. All temptation will come from within and man's own sin nature. Temptation seeming to come from without is really a manifestation of the inward lusts of the sin nature.

We just saw that there will be provisions of the Holy Spirit for believers to control their sin nature, therefore, it should not be a problem for believers to remain in God's will using the power of the HS. Man has only his own sin nature to deal with.

For the “perfect environment” of the Garden before the fall to exist in the Kingdom, God will demand both believer and unbeliever alike to maintain strict and complete control of his sin nature. This is the “rod of iron” zero tolerance rule! You cannot have a perfect environment with a bunch of Old Sin Natures running around and out of control. God will make meeting that standard possible by:

- The removal of Satan as an influence
- The available provisions of the indwelling and empowerment of the HS to those who take advantage of it—believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Any failure, any disobedience to God's Will, will be met with immediate and severe discipline directly from the ruler and judge, Jesus Christ.

Understand that though the Kingdom will begin populated 100% by believers with the indwelling Holy Spirit, they will procreate, and their children will procreate, and so on generation after generation. Not all of them will become believers. That may sound strange considering the visible presence of Christ as King of kings and the testimony of those who went through the Tribulation, but proof of this fact is found in the Gog Revolution at the end of the Millennium when Satan is released. As previously stated, I believe this revolt against the strict rule of Christ is allowed to reveal those rebels to the rest of mankind. Because of this strict “control your sin nature” (rod of iron rule), some rebel against it, and even with Satan locked up, they chafe and reject this strict rule. They go along with it hating it. That sin nature inside them wants out! If they have rejected the provisions of the Cross, they have little to fight that beast with, and they ultimately lose that battle. This proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that God’s solution is the only solution.

As part of the rod of iron rule, the government will deal summarily with any outbreak of sin.

**Isa 29:17** Is it not yet just a little while Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field, And the fertile field will be considered as a forest? 18 And on that day the deaf shall hear words of a book, And out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. 19 The afflicted also shall

increase their gladness in the LORD, And the needy of mankind shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. 20 For the ruthless will come to an end, and the scorner will be finished, Indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off;

**Isa 65:20** “No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Shall be thought accursed

**Jer 31:29** “In those days they will not say again, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ 30 “But everyone will die for his own iniquity...

Any overt act against the authority of the King will be punished by physical death.

To meet these same tests, the Saints will have:

- Enablement of the HS.
- Universal; knowledge of God.
- The removal of Satan.
- The manifestation of the King's presence.

This will restrain them from sinning. There will be sin, but it will be minimal and not very overt. But even under these strict conditions in perfect environment, perfect righteousness will not be produced in the Kingdom. Man still has a sin nature, and some men will still reject the King.

God will prove, for the last time, that a perfect environment will not produce righteousness. The living active presence of God reigning on earth will not be encouragement enough to produce righteousness. Only the believer walking in the Spirit will meet that standard with any consistency. Apart from God, man can do nothing. Despite these truths, man will be disobedient and even rebel against God's rule one last time. Righteousness comes from God through grace and the free will decision to want it.

Unlike in the Garden, during the Kingdom Age man has a sin nature. Like the Garden, man will be expected to be obedient. Like the Church Age, believers will have the indwelling of the HS to have the power

resources to control their sin nature. As in the Garden, there will be an expectation of obedience in the Millennium. Unlike the Garden, that obedience will be strictly enforced.