

20. WHEN KINGDOM OF GOD MEANS MONARCHY

Jesus the Messiah is coming back to reign on Earth during the millennium. During the Church age, which began at Pentecost and will cease upon his return, Jesus is building his Church community, saving millions of people from every nation, tribe, language, and people. The gospel is being preached and people believe the message and are saved from their sins and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. They'll be glorified at Jesus' return when they are resurrected. Their special role in the new world is to reign with the Messiah as his monarchy. As children of God, believers enter the Messianic monarchy when they are born again (John 3:3, 5). They are presently heirs of the kingship and they'll inherit it when Jesus returns. The kingdom of God has not been inaugurated because the king has not yet returned and you can't have a kingdom without a king. Jesus reigns in heaven, but he is sitting on God's throne not the Messiah's (David's) throne. His reign in heaven is his sovereignty over the universe because he is God. That is not the kingdom of God that the Jews were waiting for. The present age is the age for building a monarchy. Jesus is not reigning and neither is his monarchy. He sat down at the right hand of God and since then he *waits* for his enemies to be made his footstool (Heb 10:13).

In the following verses, the kingdom of God is translated as the Messianic kingship or monarchy. The visible church is not the monarchy because the redeemed are only a fraction of the visible church. The monarchy consists of God's elect, also known as the righteous, the saints, or the servants of God. They may be poor, meek, and persecuted now, but they'll inherit the Earth. They're not subjects in the Messianic kingdom; they are the government, and most of Jesus' parables are about the development of this community. The Father will crush kings on the day of his wrath, he'll judge the nations, crushing the rulers of the whole Earth (Psalm 110:1, 5-6). Then, and only then, will his Messiah begin to reign.

The Messianic Monarchy consists of believers in Jesus

Mt 5:3 It's the poor in spirit who are blessed for the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is theirs.

Mt 5:10 Those who are persecuted for doing what is right are blessed for the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is theirs.

Mt 13:38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the people of the kingdom (sons of the monarchy), and the weeds are sons of the devil.

Mt 19:14 Jesus said: Let children come to me, don't refuse them, for the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) belongs to people like this.

Mk 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was unhappy and he said to them: Let children come to me, don't refuse them, for the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) belongs to people like this

Lk 6:20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: You are blessed, you who are poor, for the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) is yours.

Lk 12:32 Don't be afraid my little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom (kingship).

Lk 18:16 Then Jesus called some children and said: Let children come to me; don't hinder them for the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) belongs to people like this.

Lk 22:29 As my Father conferred a kingdom (kingship) on me, so also I confer kingship on you.

Rev 1:6 He has made us to be a kingdom (conferred kingship on us) and made us priests to serve his God and Father. To him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Rev 1:9 I'm John, your brother and united to Jesus we are companions in suffering, the kingdom (kingship), and patient endurance. I was on the island of Patmos because I preached God's word and testified to Jesus.

Jesus is currently building his Church from every nation, language, and cultural group, gathering the Messianic community that will be his

monarchy during his earthly reign. True believers show their worth by living good lives in reverence and awe of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God and so heirs; heirs of God and co-heirs with the Messiah. When the Messiah returns to reign, his community will reign with him. Many of them are poor, meek, and persecuted for following Jesus, but in the future, the sovereignty of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to them (Dan 7:27).

Entering the monarchy

Mt 5:20 I'm telling you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of Moses' law, you'll never enter the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy).

Mt 19:23-24 Then Jesus said to his disciples: I tell you the truth, it's hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy). Again I tell you, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Mt 21:31b Then Jesus told them: I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) ahead of you.

Mk 9:47 If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It's better to enter the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) with one eye than to be thrown into hell with two eyes.

Mk 10:15 I'm telling you the truth, unless a person receives the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) like a child, he'll never enter it.

Mk 12:34 You're not far from entering the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Jn 3:3 Then Jesus said to him: I'm telling you the truth, unless a person is born again, he can't see the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Jn 3:5 Jesus answered him saying: I'm telling you the truth, unless a person is born of water and the Holy Spirit, he can't enter the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Col 1:12-13 Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. He rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom (monarchy) of his beloved Son.

Entering the kingdom of God means entering the Messianic community that Jesus said he would build. Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council and may have aspired to rule with the Messiah when he came, like the sons of Zebedee who wanted to sit at Jesus' right and left in his kingdom. Jesus told him he would need to be born again, born of water, symbolic of repentance, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave those who believed in him the right to become God's children. Entering the Messianic monarchy is entering the royal family as an heir to the throne. To the victorious Jesus gives the right to sit with him on his throne (Rev 3:21). Believers enter the kingship here and now by being born again of God's Spirit, but they won't begin to reign until they inherit the kingdom at Jesus' return. Jesus told a teacher of the law that he was not far from entering the monarchy because of the faith he exhibited.

These verses tell of the qualifications for entering the Messianic monarchy. Repentance is a prerequisite which enables the worst of sinners to enter. On the other hand, there is a warning to the unbelieving Jewish authorities. It is necessary to have the humility of a child because God opposes the proud and shows favor to the humble. One needs to be born again to enter God's family, born from above, born of the Holy Spirit. The sort of people who typically do not qualify are the rich and the hypocritical religious leaders. Persistent sin is also a hindrance; what one needs is persistence in faith.

Israel lost its claim to the monarchy

Mt 8:12 The subjects of the kingdom (original heirs of the monarchy) will be thrown outside into the darkness. There they'll weep and grind their teeth.

Mt 21:43 Therefore I'm telling you that the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) will be taken away from you (Israel) and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

Mt 22:2-3 This is what the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like. A king was preparing a wedding banquet for his son and he sent his servants to call the invitees to the banquet, but they didn't want to come.

Mt 23:13 Woe to you, teachers and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You slam the door of the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) in front of people. You don't enter and you refuse entry to those who want to enter.

Israel's leaders rejected Jesus as their Messiah and forfeited their right to be the monarchy that would rule the world with him. The parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22 follows the parable of the talents. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they knew Jesus was talking about them. Israel as a nation was rejected and the servants were told to go to the street corners and invite anyone they found to replace them. In a similar parable (Lk 14:16-24), the host says that none of those who were originally invited would get a taste of his banquet.

At the wedding banquet at Jesus' return, Christians from all nations are called the bride of Christ, Israel having refused the invitation. A man there was ejected for not wearing the right clothes, he was not dressed in the righteousness that Christ provides. Jesus told us to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, symbolized by fine linen, bright and clean (Rev 19:8, 14).

Israel continues to be God's chosen nation, but their role has been reduced to subjects of the kingdom, not rulers. God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. All Israel as a nation will be saved at Jesus' return and will live in their land as God's chosen nation, but they'll not reign with the Messiah. Jesus will reign from the heavenly Jerusalem with his resurrected monarchy, while his earthly people, Israel, will be responsible for the temple ministry where all the nations will come to worship.

These are Isaiah's final words:

The Lord declares: As the new sky and the new Earth that I'm making will endure before me, so will your name (Israel) and your descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, says the Lord. And they'll depart and look on the corpses of those who rebelled against me. Their worms won't die and their fire won't be quenched. They'll be abhorrent to all mankind (Isa 66:22-24).

Development of the Monarchy

Mt 13:24 Jesus told them another parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

Mt 13:31 Jesus told them another parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like a mustard seed which a man took and planted in his field.

Mt 13:33 Jesus told them another parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like yeast that a woman took and worked through sixty pounds of flour until it leavened it all.

Mt 13:47 The kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like a net that was cast into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.

Mt 16:19 I'll give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy). Whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in heaven.

Mt 18:23 Therefore, the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

Mt 20:1 The kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) is like this. A landowner went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

Mk 4:26 He also said: The kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) is like seed that a man scattered on the ground.

Mk 4:30 Again he said: What will we compare the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) with? What parable will we use for it?

Lk 13:18 Then Jesus asked: What does the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) resemble? What will I compare it to?

Entering the monarchy is one thing, the growth of the monarchy is another. The Christian community is compared to a tiny mustard seed, starting as a very small group but finally becoming like a tree large enough for birds to come and nest in the branches. The birds symbolize all the nations. To begin with, there were the twelve disciples and others outside that inner group, like the women who followed along and cooked for them. They weren't born again yet, but they had faith in Jesus. At Pentecost, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and 3,000 were added to the initial Messianic community. Soon, the number of men who believed grew to 5,000. Including women and children, that would mean 20,000 souls.

Jesus liked to compare the growth of the kingdom to that of seed. The growth is imperceptible. Sometimes the seed represents the word of God which the elect believe, sometimes it means the elect themselves,

and then there are the weeds which are excluded. They won't be separated until harvest time when the righteous are resurrected at Jesus' return and the wicked are condemned to hell. The field is the whole world, as the Messiah's message must be heard everywhere. The work of evangelism and instruction is compared to a woman mixing yeast with a large quantity of dough until it permeates the whole batch.

The Pharisees shut the door on those who wanted to enter the Messianic monarchy, so Jesus gave the keys to Peter as leader of the disciples. They were responsible for building the Christian community on the basis that Jesus was the Messiah. Just as a couple is bound to each other and should not seek to be released, the disciples were responsible for binding people to the Lord. Those they bound were already pledged in heaven; those they spurned were already rejected in heaven.

Jesus will come again one day to fulfill the OT prophecies and the plan that God has had for the world and our glorification. He planned the Messianic monarchy for us since the creation of the world, it was not an afterthought.