

Lesson 31  
**The Kingdom in The Revelation**  
**Part 1**

If I were to ask you what is the primary topic covered by the Book of Revelation, what would you say?

**I. Introduction**

- a. The last book of the Bible is **pre-eminently** the Book of the Kingdom of God in conflict with, and victory over, the kingdoms of this world. Even the terminology of the Revelation is couched in Kingdom language:
1. The word **throne** occurs 41 times of which 38 refer to the divine kingdom
  2. **Kingdom** is found 7 times; referring 3 times to God's Kingdom and 4 times to the kingdom of evil
  3. The term **crown** is found 11 times; in 3 references applied to Christ, to Satan, and to the Beast; 8 times it is found in reference to the believer, to the rider on the white horse, demonic hosts, to Israel, and to the Son of man.
  4. **Reign** is used 7 times always in connection with divine rule.
  5. Power, in the sense of the **authority** to rule, occurs 20 times about evenly divided between the two opposing kingdoms.
  6. 14 times the verb **judge** and its noun form judgment are used in description of the divine government.
- b. The Apocalypse is also a book of the **Second Coming** of Christ. After six verses of introductory material, the main body of the book opens with the glad announcement of the coming of the King. Rev 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. KJV*
- c. In the Revelation we see the vivid fulfillment of the Second Coming and the fully **realized** establishment of the Kingdom linked together in unmistakable clarity. Without such a coming there could be no Messianic Kingdom on the earth.
- d. When we tie together the events outlined in Revelation to those prophesied in the OT attending the advent of Messiah as he sets up and reigns in His earthly Kingdom we see that the OT prophecies and Revelation are absolutely **fused** together.
1. For example, Revelation is saturated with OT phraseology. Of its 404 verses 265 contain OT language. When these are compared with the OT prophets about **550** references to OT passages can be found.
  2. From the OT prophets we learn that in the last times there will come first, a period when God will pour out His **judgments** upon the world and that these will be followed by the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. Joel 3:1-2 *For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. KJV*
- e. The clear and exact correspondence between the general ideas of the OT prophets and the Revelation are also tied together with our Lord's eschatological discourse in the **Gospels**. All three are describing the coming of the Kingdom to earth. To wit:
1. It is a time of unparalleled **tribulation** in the world. Matt 24:21 *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. KJV*
  2. This will be followed immediately by the glorious **second** advent of Messiah when He will establish His rule over the nations. Matt 24:29-30 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. KJV*
  3. As taught by Jesus, the judgments He makes during His Kingdom reign will have **eternal** consequences Matt 25:41 *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: KJV*
- f. From the epistles we learn that at the end of the established Mediatorial Kingdom on earth, Christ delivers the Mediatorial Kingdom unto the **Father** and that will end the Mediatorial Kingdom. 1 Cor 15:23-28 *But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. NIV*
- g. When the purpose of the Mediatorial Kingdom is fulfilled by Christ, the **Universal** Kingdom, a Kingdom fit for the then existing fully redeemed and transformed creation will emerge and shall be without end. Rev 21:3-4 *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. KJV*

**II. The Church Distinguished From the Kingdom (1:4-3:22)**

- a. The entire Book of Revelation is addressed to seven literal churches located in Asia. These churches are identified under the symbolism of seven golden **candlesticks**. Rev 1:20 *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. KJV*
- b. The Greek term used in Revelation to identify the seven bodies of believers is *ekklesiai*. This term occurs in Revelation 20 times, always referring to the churches addressed. Outside of the first three chapters the term is used **only once**. Rev 22:16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. KJV*
- c. *Ekklesia* is never used in the main body of the book (4:1-22:5) where the great events of the end are described. Furthermore, the term *ekklesia* is always used in connection with churches on earth. There is no reference to a church in **heaven**.

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- d. All references to an ekklesia in the Apocalypse apply only to **local** churches. The symbol is not one candelabrum with seven branches, but rather a group of seven separate lamp-stands in the midst of which the Son of Man walks. Rev 2:1 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; KJV*
- e. It is clear from the appearance of the Greek word for Church used in the Apocalypse and the way the churches are characterized as local, individual bodies that these entities are not **identifiable** as elements of an existing Kingdom.
- f. Furthermore, the term Ekklesia is reserved for local churches on earth composed of both **good and bad** characteristics. This dismal performance is incompatible with the victorious description of Kingdom living presented in the OT. Dan 7:14 *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. KJV*
- g. The churches of Revelation are living with the expectation of a return by Christ. Clearly, the Church age then, is an interim period in which rewards and punishment lie in the **future**. There are five references to the coming of Christ between 2:5-3:11.
- h. Thus, the picture of the churches on earth being presented in the Apocalypse points **unmistakably** to the interim period between the ascension and Christ's return to establish His Kingdom on earth.
- i. In every case the regal rewards for faithful service are presented as future, they are never present during the era of the churches on earth. This clearly demonstrates the **futurity** of the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom.
- j. Significantly, the picture of the churches on earth being portrayed by the Spirit is utterly **incongruous** with the picture of the established Kingdom on earth provided in the OT prophets and by Christ Himself during His discourses on that subject.
  - 1. Ephesus had **left** her first love. Rev 2:4-5 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. KJV*
  - 2. Smyrna was being tried by **Satan**. Rev 2:10 *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. KJV*
  - 3. Pergamos was guilty of doctrinal **errors**. Rev 2:14 *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. KJV*
  - 4. Thyatira was being judged for her **fornication** etc. Rev 2:20-23 *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. KJV*
  - 5. Sardis was **dead**. Rev 3:1-2 *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. KJV*
  - 6. Philadelphia was facing significant temptation to **apostasy**. Rev 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. KJV*
  - 7. Laodicea was spiritually blind to its **nakedness** before God. Rev 3:17-18 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. KJV*
- k. So universal and persistent is this mixture of good and bad in the churches that logically this picture can in no way represent that golden era of the established Kingdom of earth when believers shall serve the Lord unswervingly and **without error**. Ps 119:1-4 *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. 2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. 4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. KJV*

### III. Application

- a. While not everyone agrees, there are many who suggest the Spirit's messages to the Churches are a progression of phases that the church on earth will pass through. Under this scheme many believe that the church on earth today is represented by the Laodicean Church.
- b. What would explain the spiritual blindness of Laodicea?
- c. How could you personally fall into the same trap as the Laodicean Church?
- d. What can you do to mitigate against that possibility?