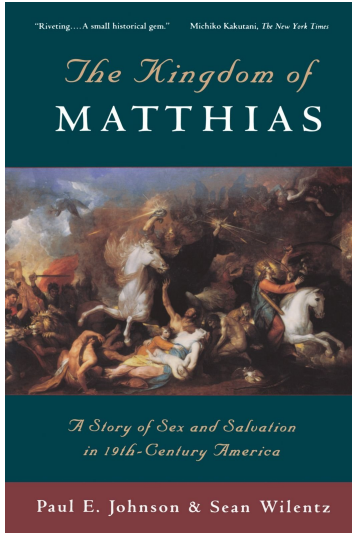


Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club Guide

January 2017



Reading Guide: *Kingdom of Matthias* by Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz (1994)

1. Does this book have a central theme or argument? What is it?
2. What did you know about the Second Great Awakening before you read the book? What do you know now? What would you like to know?
3. Did you feel like you already had to be knowledgeable about Christianity to understand this book? Why or why not?
4. Was the narrative satisfying to you? What questions did you still have at the end of the book?
5. What is the most important or memorable thing you will take away from having read this book? What surprised you most?
6. Some historians argue that *microhistory*, the deep examination of a specific incident or community as in *Kingdom of Matthias*, gives readers important insight into aspects of history that would otherwise be glossed over. Others feel that it is more important for historians to look at questions or themes that tell bigger stories. What do you think?
7. For those who have participated in earlier book club discussions, how does this reading connect to other books we have read?
8. Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend?

Author Biography

Sean Wilentz studies U.S. social and political history. He received his Ph.D. in history from Yale University (1980). Wilentz's historical scholarship has concentrated on the political and social history of the United States from the American Revolution to recent times. His major work to date, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (2005), was awarded the Bancroft Prize and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His writings on music have earned him a Grammy nomination and a Deems Taylor-ASCAP award. In his spare writing time, he is historian-in-residence at Bob Dylan's official website.

Paul E. Johnson is an American historian and professor emeritus at University of South Carolina. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, and from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a Ph.D. in 1975. He taught at Princeton University, Yale University, University of Utah, and University of South Carolina. His books include *Sam Patch, The Famous Jumper* (2003) and *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (1978)

Related Texts

If you liked *Kingdom of Matthias*, you may enjoy these other books (descriptions courtesy of amazon.com):

The Petticoat Affair: Manners, Mutiny, and Sex in Andrew Jackson's White House
by John F. Marszalek (2000)

Marszelak has written a scintillating account of the "Eaton Affair," America's first great tabloid tale. Deemed a "loose woman" by the wives of Andrew Jackson's cabinet, Margaret Eaton, the new spouse of Secretary of War John Eaton, was therefore snubbed at all social functions. A seemingly trivial matter, it soon escalated into a major cause celebre with a variety of political repercussions. The author places the Eaton Affair squarely within the context of Jacksonian democracy.

A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837
by Paul E. Johnson (1978)

A Shopkeeper's Millennium remains a landmark work--brilliant both as a new interpretation of the intimate connections among politics, economy, and religion during the Second Great Awakening, and as a surprising portrait of a rapidly growing frontier city. The religious revival that transformed America in the 1820s, making it the most militantly Protestant nation on earth and spawning reform movements dedicated to temperance and to the abolition of slavery, had an especially powerful effect in Rochester, New York. Paul E. Johnson explores the reasons for the revival's spectacular success there, suggesting important links between its moral accounting and the city's new industrial world.

The Allure of Immortality: An American Cult, a Florida Swamp, and a Renegade Prophet
by Lyn Millner (2015)

For five days in December 1908 the body of Cyrus Teed lay in a bathtub at a beach house just south of Fort Myers, Florida. His followers, the Koreshans, waited for signs that he was coming back to life. Teed was a charismatic and controversial guru who at the age of 30 had been "illuminated" by an angel in his electro-alchemical laboratory. In *The Allure of Immortality*, Lyn Millner weaves the many bizarre strands of Teed's life and those of his followers into a riveting story of angels, conmen, angry husbands, yellow journalism, and ultimately, hope.

Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism
by Chris Jennings (2016)

In the wake of the Enlightenment and the onset of industrialism, a generation of dreamers took it upon themselves to confront the messiness and injustice of a rapidly changing world. In *Paradise Now*, Chris Jennings tells the story of five interrelated utopian movements, revealing their relevance both to their time and to our own. Over time, these movements fell apart, and the national mood that had inspired them was drowned out by the dream of westward expansion and the waking nightmare of the Civil War. Their most galvanizing ideas, however, lived on, and their audacity has influenced countless political movements since.

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