

The Messiah Has Come
Week 10
Matthew 4:23-25
“The Kingdom of Heaven”

Introduction

Don't you believe that I Am in The Father and The Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father Who lives in Me does His works. Believe Me that I Am in The Father and The Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves. **John 14:10-11**

As we continue our study in Matthew's Gospel, we are given a glimpse of Jesus' teaching ministry in His home region of Galilee. Once more, Matthew is giving undeniable proofs that Jesus is indeed the Christ (Messiah), The King of The Jews. *The Old Testament* prophets had prophesied that The Messiah would do great healing miracles in the Name of God.

On that day the deaf will hear the words of a document, and out of a deep darkness the eyes of the blind will see. The humble will have joy after the joy in The LORD, and the poor people will rejoice in The Holy One of Israel. **Isaiah 29:18-19**

So then, why did Jesus do healing miracles in addition to His preaching and teaching? Answer: To give validation to His ministry and proof of Who He was. Jesus taught The Word of God, applying it to Himself and His coming kingdom, and then reinforcing His messages with miracles, so that the people would come to believe in Him. And Matthew's Gospel goes to great lengths to show, that Jesus was indeed the promised King Redeemer of Israel.

I find it interesting that there are only thirty-five recorded miracles of Jesus in all of the New Testament. For we know that He offered up many wondrous signs than were not recorded (**John 20:30**), but it is important for us to understand that our faith is not based upon the miraculous works of Jesus, but rather, The Word of God as it proves out the identity of Christ. He is God incarnate, The Alpha and The Omega, The Beginning and The End. The Spirit of God has convinced us of these things, even though we may have never witnessed a miracle with our own eyes! How is this possible? Because:

...faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. **Romans 10:17**

Did you realize that many of the people whom Jesus healed or whom He performed signs in their presence ended up rejecting Him? Its true. So you see, genuine faith does not come from witnessing or even experiencing a miracle. But rather, it comes from trusting in God's Word. Jesus did many miracles, but they were only done to validate, *The Word* He spoke.

Many so-called “preachers” today claim that they can do miracles in Jesus Name. I do not believe those people for a moment. Oh, I believe (in fact I know) that God still does miracles, but I do not believe that He empowers people with miraculous powers anymore. For we have The Word of God at our fingertips. And if we do not believe The Word, then no miracle will ever be enough to convince us.

Today, we will see how Jesus used miracles in order to offer proof of His message. And what was His message? That the kingdom of heaven is near! I think that for many, even within the church today, “*The Kingdom*” is a difficult concept. Hopefully, we will be able to answer any questions you might have about the kingdom of heaven. *The Kingdom of Heaven* is mentioned thirty-two times in Matthew's gospel. And another four times, he mentions *The Kingdom of God* (essentially the same thing). If something is important enough to mention that many times, and if miracles are performed in order to offer proof of its existence, then perhaps we should take every opportunity to find out exactly what it is and how it pertains to us.

As we do a deep dive into this “*kingdom study*” in search of its true meaning and purpose, we will see three things revealed to us in this particular passage. We see *The Promised Kingdom*, *The Perfect King*, and *The Previewed Kingdom*. Please allow me to explain.

The Promised Kingdom (vs. 23)

Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. **Matthew 4:23**

First of all, Matthew points out for us that Jesus was basically a *traveling preacher*, going throughout the region from one synagogue to the next preaching “**the good news of the kingdom**”. Synagogues were the primary designations for the instruction of God’s Word. While the temple in Jerusalem was Israel’s most holy site, the local synagogue was the place where the people would gather on the Sabbath (the sabbath began every Friday evening and lasted until Saturday evening) in order to hear the teaching from God’s Word.

It is said that the synagogue came to be during the time of the Babylonian exile after the city of Jerusalem was destroyed along with her temple. Those who remained faithful to God during this time needed a place of worship, so enter the local synagogue. And it remained thus throughout the post exilic period and even still today.

In order for a town to qualify to have its own synagogue, there had to be at least ten Jewish males in the town over the age of thirteen who would be devoted to the teaching of God’s Word. This is believed to have originated with the prayer of Abraham over God’s destruction of Sodom, as Abraham asked The LORD if He would indeed spare the city, if only ten righteous people lived there (**Genesis 18:32**). In fact, many Jews believed that if God would have been able to find ten righteous people on the earth in Noah’s day (The ark had only eight people), then God would not have destroyed the world. Not that I believe that to be the case, but I am simply stating a common Jewish belief.

The Synagogue also served as a school for local boys, who would attend every week to learn to read and write and study *The Old Testament* Scriptures. So needless to say, every local synagogue became a focal point of the town. In fact, a great many of them were built upon a hill, so that they would stand at the highest point of the city. Thus emphasizing the importance of keeping God as the main priority of life.

Jesus traveled extensively throughout His home province of Galilee to teach and preach, Matthew tells us. The Greek that is translated to “*all over*” in **verse 23** is derived from the word “*peritago*”, and in this particular tense, it is implied that He was going continually over and over again to these synagogues for the purpose, as Matthew says, of “*teaching and preaching*”.

The word for teach in the Greek text is *didasko*, and it means to give instruction. It was very common in those days for a visiting Rabbi to stop at the local synagogue in order to offer expository teaching from God’s Word. *The Old Testament* scrolls would be read, and then the Rabbi would expound upon the text explaining it for those who had gathered. Much as a good expositor in the church would do today. An example of Jesus preaching in this way can be found in **Luke 4:16-21**.

The word for “preaching” used by Matthew is “*kerusso*” which means to proclaim. So, in short, Jesus taught the Scriptures as no one else ever has, or even could, and then He used them to proclaim the truth about the kingdom of heaven. He would then say, “**The kingdom of heaven has come near!**” (**Matthew 4:17b**).

So, exactly what is this kingdom of heaven that Matthew mentions some thirty plus times in his writing? Well, as we have repeatedly stated, Matthew’s gospel was written as proof that Jesus was indeed the long awaited Jewish Messiah, King of the Jews, and you cannot have a king without a kingdom. The Kingdom of God (or heaven) speaks of the time, when God will come to rule over all the earth. As of now, Satan is having a field day in the world, but a time is coming when he will be dealt with, and Christ will reign. As Believers, we are to long for this time. That is why we are instructed in the model prayer to pray:

Our Father Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done. on earth **Matthew 6:9b-10 (KJV)**

When Christ returns, He will establish His kingdom to reign upon the earth. Therefore, those who are wise will endeavor to press into the kingdom while there is still time. John warned the people to repent for the kingdom was coming, Jesus preached that the kingdom was here, and those who are wise must now enter in to it.

The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is urgently invited to enter it. **Luke 16:16**

The Perfect King (vs. 24)

Then the news about Him spread throughout Syria. So they brought to Him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And He healed them. **Matthew 4:24**

As I mentioned earlier, you cannot have a king without a kingdom, and conversely, you cannot have a kingdom without a *king*. Fortunately for us, we have the greatest King the world has ever known. And we see His fame spread throughout the land in Matthew's day, but the disciple would be amazed at how much our LORD's fame has spread throughout the world today! The people from all around the region were bringing their sick and downtrodden to Him for healing. And now, people turn to Him for healing from the disease of sin. He is God, our Healer! His miraculous power revealed exactly Who He is.

Matthew wanted his Jewish brethren to recognize the king of the Jews, and that is why he made sure to include the miracles of Jesus in his writing. But apart from healing of the sick, Jesus also cast out the demonic spirits and set the people free from their tormenting presence. I can only imagine how masses of people with all manner of troubles made their pilgrimage to Christ in order to find what they had been searching for. The downtrodden and out cast of society were drawn to His power like no other.

Believe it or not, this is yet another proof of Who He is. For just as Christ was rejected by the so-called "Who's who" of society, so also were His followers. He was God's anointed King, and yet His own refused to acknowledge in Him. And those who came to Him for help were themselves outcasts. Now *The Old Testament* tells us that Christ would be a descendant from David's line and take His place on David's throne. Now listen to what The Scriptures have to say about David when he was on the run from King Saul and living in caves.

So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. When David's brothers and his whole family heard, they went down and joined him there. In addition, every man who was desperate, in debt, or discontented rallied around him, and he became their leader. **1 Samuel 22:1-2a**

Do you feel desperate, downtrodden, or discontent this morning? Then run to King Jesus! For the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven is to accept, appreciate, and adore heaven's true King. And His Name is above every name. When Peter and John healed the lame man at the entrance to the temple, they were questioned by the religious leaders as to what power enabled them to perform such a miracle. Their answer is compelling:

After they had Peter and John stand before them, they began to question them: “By what power or in what name have you done this?” Then Peter was filled with The Holy Spirit and said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead — by Him this man is standing here before you healthy. This Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.” **Acts 4:7-12**

When Jesus healed a man who was blind from birth, the Pharisees questioned the man in like manner, demanding to know who it was that healed him, and where had this healer come from. The former blind beggar's response is one of my favorite Scriptures of all time.

“This is an amazing thing!” the man told them. “You don’t know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him. Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He wouldn’t be able to do anything.” **John 9:30-33**

So in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must first come by faith to *Heaven's King!*

The Previewed Kingdom (vs. 25)

Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. **Matthew 4:25**

What took place in Galilee and the surrounding areas was simply a preview and *foreshadowing*, if you will, of what will happen on a much grander scale in the future. For you see, at the present time, the kingdom of heaven is merely a spiritual one, but a time is coming, and I believe in the not so distant future, that we will be a part of not just a spiritual kingdom, but a physical one. For when Christ returns, He will indeed usher in an everlasting kingdom. When that kingdom comes, all diseases and demonic influence will be forever vanquished.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them. They will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. **Revelation 21:1-4**

The healings that took place in Galilee are but a preview, a sample of the ultimate healing that will occur when Christ returns. For then, it will not be just a temporary healing and restoration of a small area (Galilee was but 60 miles long and 30 miles wide). But rather, the miraculous healing that Christ will bring will cover all the earth. He will usher in a kingdom of holiness, health, and wellness over mind, body, and spirit, and with these, everlasting peace.

And not only were the healings in Galilee a foreshadowing of the coming kingdom of heaven, but also the drawing of those from extended regions, who came to Christ for healing, for Matthew tells us that people came from far and wide seeking the healing that The Savior offered (**Matthew 4:25**). Listen to what the book of *Revelation* has to say about those who will be drawn to Jesus, the King of kings, and LORD of lords by the time His kingdom finally comes.

After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before The Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

Salvation belongs to our God, Who is seated on the throne, and to The Lamb! All the angels stood around the throne, and along with the elders and the four living creatures they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, saying,

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen. Revelation 7:9-12

So the things that took place in tiny Galilee, when King Jesus was among them, are but a foretaste of the glory that will be revealed when the kingdom comes! And to that end, we must ever be watchful and remember to pray:

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

In order to have access to this great kingdom, one must first come by faith to its King, and live for the day of His return. **Even so, come LORD Jesus.**

And let those who anxiously await His return all say... **TRUTH!!!**