

The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17-18

1. *Why is this subject important?*

A. Jesus chose these to be the words that he began His ministry with

B. And they were also the words that John the Baptist began his ministry with:

Now in those days John the Baptist *came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”_Matthew 3:1-2

C. These are also the words that He tells the disciples to begin their message with:

⁷And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Matthew 10:7

D. The Kingdom of Heaven/The Kingdom of God appear in 85 total verses between Matthew and Acts.

E. It also says in Acts that Jesus specifically taught on this subject while being with His disciples during the 40 days following His resurrection.

³To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3

2. Let’s revisit that passage in Matthew 4 to get a better understanding of this:

“Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; ¹³and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: “The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light, And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a Light dawned”.

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:13-18

A. The prophecy in Isaiah:

The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. ³ You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian...

⁶ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:2-12

3. The story of the Bible is a story of transfers of power

A. Man was originally given power and dominion

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 2:26-28

B. Adam and Eve sinned and gave away their authority

C. After several generations, evil was ruling over humanity:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5

D. God exerts His power and floods the earth to start over

E. Israel's Captivity to Egypt

F. Israel's deliverance

G. Israel's Charge to take power over the promise land

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, ²and when the Lord your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them

Deuteronomy 7:1-2

H. Before God sent them on this mission, He gave them clear instructions on how the nation should operate once they take power over the land

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Exodus 19:5-6

I. Israel fights 13 battles under Joshua to clear out the promised land

J. 180 years in the time of the Judges

¹¹Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord...and they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. ¹⁴The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold

them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies....

¹⁶ Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. ¹⁸ When the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge”

Judges 2:11-16

K. The times Under the Kings in Judah

40 years under Saul- 40 years under David

19 years of evil kings followed by 66 years of revival under Asa and Jehoshaphat

134 years of wicked kings- Revival under Hezekiah for 29 years

57 years of wicked kings followed by a revival under Josiah for 31 years

23 years of wicked kings and then they get taken captive by Babylon

70 years in captivity- King Cyrus takes over and releases them

The temple gets rebuilt, and the nation falls into depravity for 57 years

Ezra and Nehemiah come along and lead the nation into revival for an undetermined amount of time

During these transfers of power, the nation would resubmit to God and His commands and the altars to other gods would be destroyed

² Asa did good and right in the sight of the Lord his God, ³ for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim, ⁴ and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment. ⁵ He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah.

2 Chronicles 14:2-5

L. All this is setting the stage for what will be the greatest transfer of power in history at the coming of the Lord

⁹ “Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others...”²³ “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.’²⁴ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.²⁵ He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.²⁶ But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.²⁷ Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.’

Daniel 7:19-27

A. What happens when the Kingdom of God shows up?

²³ Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.²⁵ Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Matthew 4:23-25

“The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”

1 John 3:8

“If I cast out demons by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of heaven has come upon you”

Luke 11:20

4. So, What is the Ultimate Premillennial Expression of The Kingdom of God Ruling Over the Earth Realm?

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

The American Story

-33 AD Jesus is crucified, resurrected and ascended

-For several hundred years there is massive persecution