

# The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven – Matt 4:12-25

## The Gospel Age of Hope - #8

**Introduction** – Adam was created a king, a viceroy of God charged to subdue the earth and take dominion over it. But Adam was unfaithful and plunged the world into sin. The Second Adam, Jesus Christ, came to reverse the results of the First Adam's sin and to accomplish the task which the First Adam had failed to do.

**The Second Adam** (Matt 4:12-25) – After successfully standing against the devil's temptations (4:1-11), this Second Adam began His kingdom work. John had prepared the way (3:1-2), and when John is arrested, Jesus withdrew to Galilee; fulfilling Isaiah's prophesy (vv15-16). It is there, in this place of darkness, that Jesus began to preach, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (v17). Images of the sea were often representations of the Gentiles (distinct from Israel which was symbolized in land-images). Jesus calls fishermen and tells them to follow Him for He will make them "fishers of men" (v19), already hinting at the breadth of this kingdom work.

**The Gospel of the Kingdom** (v23-25) – His message is summarized as the Good News of the Kingdom. It was not "Repent, for I have bad news for you," but "Repent, for I have good news for you." And this good news was news about a kingdom. A new ruler had come; God was going to take charge of a world that had rebelled against Him. A rebellious world was going to be brought back into harmony with heaven, so that God's will would be done on earth as in heaven (Matt 6:10).

**The Coming of the Kingdom** – Prophets had looked forward to a time when God's appointed King would come to sit on the throne. As we have seen, Psalm 2:8-9, one of the most quoted psalms in the New Testament, shows God the Father giving the nations to His Son. The promise was obviously a rule over the entire world, and not simply the Israel (Psalm 72:8-11). This kingdom, Jesus declared, was at hand, and the people in that day were called upon to heed the change.

**History On Earth** (Dan 2) – When Daniel was in exile under Nebuchadnezzar, God miraculously told Daniel of Nebuchadnezzar's secret dream and the interpretation of it (Dan 2). The image represented four kingdoms (and since Josephus it has been widely understood that these kingdoms were Baylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome). Praising God for the vision, Daniel exclaimed, "*He removes kings and raises up kings;*" (Dan 2:21). The interpretation described the establishment of the kingdom of God during the period of the Roman Empire, a kingdom which would crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but would itself endure forever (Dan 2:44).

**Ascending to the Throne** (Dan 7:13-14) – In this later vision, Daniel foresaw Christ's ascension and enthronement as King. It is sometimes interpreted as a vision of the Second Coming of Christ, but notice that Christ is going *up* to the Ancient of Days in the vision; He is not coming *down* to earth. He was ascending, not descending.

**Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven** – Returning to Matt 4:17, 23, Jesus is preaching, and He is preaching of a kingdom, the City of God, that is invading the kingdom of man. This is an event that begins and continues in space and time in the events of our world, not simply up in heaven. The gospel is not simply, 'if you believe, you will go to heaven.' That is true, but it is only partially true. And understanding this changes the way we preach, understand, and apply the gospel of the kingdom.

**Kingdom Gospel** - In Matt 9:35-38 we see this phrase, "*gospel of the kingdom*" again. Jesus was not only interested in saving people from this earth, but in establishing a new kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy (Rom 14:17). The Second Adam is interested in a gospel that transforms this place.

**Kingdom Repentance** (Matt 3:2) – In our day rarely is repentance preached. When it is, we preach that we must repent because we are sinners (which is true), but we need to preach that we must repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Kingdom Teaching** (Acts 1:3) – Watch the apostles to see what it is we are to preach and teach. They followed Jesus for three years and after His resurrection, in preparation of sending them out, Jesus spent those forty days instructing them on the things *pertaining to the kingdom of God*.

**Kingdom Preaching** (Acts 8:12) – After the forty days, His ascension, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, this is what the apostles teach – *the things concerning the kingdom of God*. (cf. Acts 20:25, 28:31).

**Kingdom Reasoning** (Acts 19:8) – In defending the faith to unbelieving Jews, Paul spoke boldly, *reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God*.

**What Is This Kingdom?** – There is much more to study about the kingdom of God (and we will) but first of all, what have we learned?

**Rule from Heaven, Filling the Earth** – Jesus and His kingdom has all authority over heaven and earth. As the stone destroyed the earthly kingdoms on the earth, so the stone grows to become a great mountain that fills, not heaven, but the whole earth. And so, Paul, writing to the Philippians would promise that the work of the cross would spread so that "*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Phil 2:10-11). The kingdom of heaven is the rule and realm of the Lord Jesus Christ, manifested in history according to His good pleasure. We are not living in two kingdoms, one secular/civil and one spiritual/holy. Jesus is King of kings and the kings of this earth and their governments must bow the knee to Him. And we must remember that as long as they do not bow down to Jesus, they will bow down to idols, and they will become like the idols they worship.

**On Earth As in Heaven** – Jesus teaches to pray just this in the Lord's Prayer. Thy *kingdom* come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. We are taught to pray that which God is pleased to answer. The Second Adam, and His kingdom followers, will not fail as the First Adam did. In Christ, the church will accomplish what the First Adam failed to do.