

Seeking My King & His Kingdom

Lesson #16 Announcing: The Kingdom Is At Hand

The prophets of the Old Testament emphasized the Ruler who would be the indispensable figure in the coming Kingdom; character, wisdom, and power to rule for God among men

A. The Restoration Of Man's Lost Dominion must come through a Person.

Gen. 3:15 He shall bruise the usurper's head

Ps. 72:1 The judgments of God will be committed to the "King."

Isa. 9:6 The government of God will "rest on His shoulders."

B. The Ruler of the future Mediatorial Kingdom will be a member of the human race.

Gen. 3:15 "Seed" of woman

Gen. 17:8 "Seed" of Abraham

Gen. 49:10 Tribe of Judah

II Sam. 7:14 House Of David

Isa. 11:1 "Rod" from family of Jesse

Jer. 23:5 "Branch" out of the royal line of David

Micah 5:2 Born in Bethlehem

Isa. 7:14 Mother is a Jewish virgin

C. Certain names and titles applied to the future Ruler indicate that He will be both human and divine in nature.

- Isa. 9:6 a child is born...and his name ...the mighty God
- Isa. 32:1-2 Reigns in righteousness and names Him "a man"
- Dan. 7:13 King's appearance as "like unto the son of man"
- Isa. 53; Ps. 22 His experiences are common to mankind
 - Taken "out of the womb"; feeds at His mother's breasts
 - Acquainted with grief, wounded and bruised
 - Suffers with thirst
 - Comes down "into the dust of death."
- Is. 7:14 Immanuel; God with us
- Isa. 9 Isaiah crowns Him with an aggregate of titles which exude divinity
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
- Isa. 35:4 The One who is "your God will come...he will come and save you."

According to Old Testament prophecy, the Messiah would be the Divine Son of God.

Yet, He would also be a descendant of David, born of a virgin, in the village of Bethlehem.

He would present Himself as the King of Israel riding on the foal of a donkey.

He would be rejected, suffer, die and rise again from the grave.

The Expectation of the Jewish People

1. The New Testament record proves many times that those who looked to Jesus as the Messiah expected Him to restore the kingdom to Israel.

John 6:15 After Jesus fed the multitudes, He perceived "that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king."

2. The masses associated the Messiah with His kingly role. Their purpose was selfish but their expectation is clear.

Luke 19:11 At the end of His ministry, Jesus was dealing with those who, "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

He tells them a parable that prepares them for His departure and return.

However, the expectation is again obvious.

Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathaea, a highly respected member of the Council, who was waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [Luke 23:51]

Luke 24:21 The disciples on the road to Emmaus were disappointed after the death of Christ because they expected that He should be the one "which should have redeemed Israel."

This redemption refers to a physical kingdom. Evidently, the preaching of Christ for three years had not doused their hopes in a restored kingdom.

Acts 1:6 Immediately before the ascension of Christ, the disciples asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Note: So, even after His death, burial and resurrection, they were still looking for a literal, earthly kingdom.

As we look at the Scripture in the New Testament regarding the "announcement" of the Kingdom, we need to:

1. Heed **WHAT** the incarnate King said about His Kingdom

2. Pay attention to the time and circumstances **WHEN** He said what He said.

Note: "From that time" is recorded twice in Matthew. [Matt. 4:17 Starts His ministry in Capernaum; Repent, for the Kingdom from Heaven is at hand.]

[Matt. 16:21 Beware of teachings of Pharisees & Sadducees - Who do you say that I am?

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. - Do not tell anyone I am the Messiah. From that time...Jesus began to tell His disciples He would go to Jerusalem, suffer, die and rise again.]

1. Both instances were marked by a definite historical crisis

2. Jesus began to speak a message distinctly framed by the purpose of God in relation to the historical circumstances peculiar to the hour.

A. The New Testament Period opens with several verbal announcements of a Kingdom.

1. It was spoken of By Angels to:

- Luke 1:11-17 Zacharias
- Luke 1:26-35 Virgin Mary
- Matt. 1:20-25 Mary's husband Joseph
- Luke 2:8-15 Shepherds in Judea

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| 2. It was anticipated by the Magi from the east. | Matt. 2:1-6 |
| 3. It was celebrated by the song of Elizabeth. | Luke 1:39-45 |
| 4. It was celebrated by the Magnificat of Mary. | Luke 1:46-55 |
| 5. It was celebrated by the prophetic utterance of Zacharias. | Luke 1:67-79 |
| 6. This announcement of the Kingdom was called "gospel" or good news. | Mark 1:14 |
| 7. This good news was preached by John the Baptist. | Matt. 3:1-2 |
| 8. This good news was preached by Jesus. | Matt. 4:17 |
| 9. This good news was preached by the 12 disciples. | Matt. 10:5-7 |
| 10. This good news was preached later by the appointed 70 | Luke 19:1, 9, 11 |

B. The Gospels present Jesus as the King of this Kingdom

1. Matt. 1:1 - Tells of His descent from the royal line in Israel
2. When the Magi from the east came, they asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" [Matt. 2:1-2]
3. When Herod called the religious authorities of the nation to inquire where the messianic King would be born, they answered with no hesitation: "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet...for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel." [Matt. 2:4-6]
4. Both Mary [His virgin mother] and Joseph [legal father] were descendants of the royal house of David.
5. Early in Jesus' ministry, Nathanael expressed his faith in Jesus: John 1:48-50
"Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."
a. Jesus did not repudiate the title, but graciously commended Nathanael for what he had come to believe. Nathaniel asked him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ Nathaniel replied to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰ Jesus told him, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than that."

C. The announcement of the Kingdom was supported by miraculous works.

1. These miracles began with the ministry of the King Himself.
His forerunner, John, "did no miracle." [John 10:41]
2. Matt. 4:23-24 Then he went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every illness among the people.
²⁴ His fame spread throughout Syria, and people brought to him everyone who was sick—those afflicted with various diseases and pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralyzed—and he healed them.
Matt. 8:16 When evening came, people brought to him many who were possessed by demons. He drove out the spirits by speaking a command and healed everyone who was sick.
Matt. 9:35 Then Jesus began traveling throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, Proclaiming The Gospel Of The Kingdom, and healing every disease and every illness.

Matt. 11:2-5 Now when John heard in prison about the activities of the Messiah, he sent a message by his disciples ³ and asked him, "Are you the Coming One, or should we wait for someone else?"⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and observe: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the destitute hear the good news.

Isa. 35:5-6 "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unblocked; ⁶ then the lame will leap like deer and the tongues of speechless people will sing for joy.

Matt. 12:15 When Jesus became aware of this, he left that place. Many crowds followed him, and he healed all of them,

Matt. 15:30 Large crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, those unable to talk, and many others. They placed them at his feet, and he healed them.

3. Divine authority to perform similar miracles was given by Jesus to His twelve disciples who were Sent To Announce The Good News Of The Kingdom.

Matt. 10:1-8 Then Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over unclean spirits, so that they could drive them out and heal every disease and every illness. ...

⁵ These were the Twelve whom Jesus sent out after he had given them these instructions:...
Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

⁶ But Go Rather To The Lost Sheep Of The House Of Israel.

As you go, make this announcement: 'The Kingdom From Heaven Is Near!'

⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.

You have received without payment, so give without payment.

Note: The ministry of Jesus and His authority of the 12 and the 70 were special for this time. God did not promise to duplicate them in our age. The Lord's commission to us emphasizes the proclamation of the MESSAGE, not the performing of miracles. [Matt. 28:19-20]

Our message is, "Christ died for our sins." He has suffered, died and risen from the dead and offers His salvation to all who will believe.

D. The impact of these miracles upon the people of Israel was tremendous.

1. Mark 1:28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

2. Mark 1:32-33 When evening came, after the sun had set, people started bringing to him everyone who was sick or possessed by demons. ³³ In fact, the whole city gathered at the door.

3. Mark 1:35-37 In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went to a deserted place and prayed there. ³⁶ Simon and his companions searched frantically for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they told him, "Everyone's looking for you."

4. Mark 2:1-4 Several days later, Jesus returned to Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. ² Such a large crowd gathered that there wasn't room for them, even in front of the door. Jesus was speaking his message to them ³ when some people came and brought him a paralyzed man being carried by four men. ⁴ Since they couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof over the place where he was. They dug through it and let down the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying.

Mark 3:7-10 So Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea. A great multitude from Galilee, Judea, ⁸ Jerusalem, Idumea, from across the Jordan, and from the region around Tyre and Sidon followed him. They came to him because they kept hearing about everything he was doing. ⁹ Jesus told his disciples to have a boat ready for him so that the crowd wouldn't crush him, ¹⁰ because he had healed so many people that everyone who had diseases kept crowding up against him in order to touch him.

Dr. Warfield: "Disease and death must have been almost eliminated for a brief time in the area of Capernaum. As the enthusiasm spread, men flocked from every quarter to see this great thing."

E. The genuineness and import of Christ's miracles were widely acknowledged.

1. This was true even on the part of His enemies among the religious leaders of Israel.

a. John 11:47-48 So the high priests and the Pharisees assembled the Council and said, "What are we going to do? This man is performing many [miracles] signs.

⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation."

Note: sign = miracle = semeion in Greek = a miracle which authenticates both the messenger and the truth of his message

b. Although they rejected Him, they could not deny the reality of His miracles.

c. They could not deny that such miracles, according to the prophets, were the authenticating signs of the Messiah and His Kingdom.

d. After His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His cleansing of the temple, the chief priests and scribes "saw the wonderful things that He did" in the temple, healing the blind and the lame; yet they were "sore displeased" when they heard even the children crying: "Hosanna to the son of David." This was in recognition of His regal claims and signs. [Matt. 21:15]

e. The religious leaders asked Jesus a crucial question: "Hearest thou what these say?"

f. Jesus indicates beyond dispute His full approval and acceptance of the Messianic title.

He quoted from their own Scriptures showing that even "babes" are sometimes wiser than the most learned of men. [Matt. 21:12-16]

F. The Announced Kingdom Was Near At Hand

1. The Kingdom had "come upon" those who heard its proclamation and witnessed its signs.

Luke 11:20 But if I drive out demons by the power of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

2. As to the personal presence of its King, the Kingdom was actually "in the midst" of men.

a. The Pharisees asked "when" the Kingdom of God would come. Luke 17:20

b. Jesus answered: "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." [among you]

Note: King James renders: "within" you. Surely in no sense could the Kingdom of God have been "within" the hearts of the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking. They had charged blasphemously that His miracles were being accomplished through the power of the devil.

[Matt. 12:24]

Consider: The Kingdom was already "in the midst of" men regardless of their attitude. The divinely appointed King was visibly present in incarnate form on earth where He must eventually reign.

Jesus' words to His disciples immediately followed: Luke 17:22 Then Jesus told the disciples, "The time will come during which you will long to see one of these days when the Son of Man is with you, but you won't see it."

3. As to the actual establishment of its government on earth, the Kingdom had come nigh unto men.

Luke 10:8-11 Whenever you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat whatever they serve you,⁹ heal the sick that are there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you!'

But whenever you go into a town and people don't welcome you, go out into its streets and say,¹¹ 'We're wiping off your town's dust that clings to our feet in protest against you!

But realize this: the kingdom of God is near!'

Note: The same Greek word *eggizo* is used in recording John the Baptist's announcement of the Kingdom as something "at hand."

Consider: The long-awaited Kingdom of Old Testament prophecy had come so near to the men of that generation that they had actually seen the face of the King. They had also witnessed the supernatural works which were the predicted harbingers [a person or thing that announces or signals the approach of another] of His Kingdom.

The Rejection of the King & His Kingdom

A. The Proclamation of the Kingdom was inseparably connected with its King.

1. The Kingdom was "at hand" because the Mediatorial King had arrived.

2. To reject the King would be to reject the Kingdom.

a. The existence of God's Mediatorial Kingdom on earth has always been conditioned.

- It was received as a promise by Abraham through faith.
- It was established in history at Sinai subject to Israel's willingness to obey God.
- It was terminated on earth because of Israel's sin.
- Its restoration on earth is foretold by the prophets in connection with Israel's repentance.
- The initial demand of its announcement in the gospel period was: "The Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe [keep believing] the gospel." [Mark 1:15]

B. The good news of the Kingdom was announced to Israel alone.

1. The Apostle John describes the mission of Christ:

John 1:11 He came unto His own [the people of Israel].

a. In the great commission of the Twelve, they were expressly forbidden by the Lord to go into any way of the Gentiles or to enter into any city of the Samaritans;

But To Go Only "To The Lost Sheep Of The House Of Israel." [Matt. 10:5-6]

b. Christ sent the 70 Luke 10:1 "before his face to every town and place that he intended to go."

c. Matt. 15:24 The Lord's words to the Syro-Phoenician woman defined sharply His own original ministry with reference to the Kingdom. "I am not sent, but unto the Lost Sheep Of The House Of Israel."

Note: During Christ's earthly ministry, He did not emphasize His offer as Savior of all nations. That offer would be made through His disciples after His death, burial and resurrection.

C. The preaching of the Kingdom to Israel laid upon that chosen nation the demand for a decision.

1. The imperatives used in all the early preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom: repent, believe, receive, confess and follow.

2. No room was left for neutrality. Matt. 12:30 The person who isn't with me is against me, and the person who isn't gathering with me is scattering.

Matt. 6:24 "No one can serve two masters, because either he will hate one and love the other, or be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and riches!"

3. The Lord Jesus Christ came to His own people.

Matt. 1:21; 2:6

a. The nation Israel did not receive Him as their Messiah, King & Savior.

John 1:11

"He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

b. They wanted a King who could feed and heal their bodies.

John 6:26

c. They cared not for a Savior who could feed and heal their souls.

John 6:58-66

Consider: We look for His hand, but not His face.

4. Christ, through His miracles and mighty works, gave unmistakable and undeniable evidence that He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of the living God; yet the Jews in their unbelief still asked for a sign [John 2:18; Matthew 12:38-40; 13:58; Luke 4:23; I Corinthians 1:22].

5. The demand for a decision was immediate and urgent because the King was among them and the regal feast of good things was ready. There could be no acceptable excuse for delay.

Luke 14:15-24 Now one of those eating with him heard this and told him,

"How blessed is the person who will eat in the kingdom of God!"

¹⁶ Jesus told him, "A man gave a large banquet and invited many people.

When it was time for the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who were invited, 'Come! Everything is now ready.'¹⁸ Every single one of them began asking to be excused.

The first told him, 'I bought a field, and I need to go out and inspect it. Please excuse me.'¹⁹ Another said, 'I bought five pairs of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out.

Please excuse me.'²⁰ Still another said, 'I recently got married, so I can't come.'

²¹ "So the servant went back and reported all this to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and told his servant, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring back the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'²² The servant said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.'²³ Then the master told the servant, 'Go out into the streets and the lanes and make the people come in, so that my house may be full.'²⁴ Because I tell all of you, none of those men who were invited will taste anything at my banquet."

6. Even the ordeal of death could not be permitted to temper the high urgency of the hour.

Luke 9:57-62 The Would-be Followers of Jesus

⁵⁷ While they were walking along the road, a man told him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

⁵⁸ Jesus told him, "Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to rest."

1. Matt. 8:19 tells us this man was a scribe. Volunteered until he heard the cost: Deny himself

⁵⁹ He told another man, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰ But he told him, "Let the dead bury their own dead. But you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

1. He would not take up the cross and die to self.

Don't permit our love of family weaken our love for the Lord as our first priority.

⁶¹ Still another man said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say goodbye to those at

home." ⁶² Jesus told him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

1. Could not follow Christ because he was looking back instead of ahead.

His looking back was in the way of obedience.

7. The accredited messengers of the "Kingdom is at hand" brought into every village and home the crisis of swift decision.

a. If received, the messengers brought blessings.

b. If rejected, the very dust of that place was to be shaken off in token of certain judgment.

Luke 10:8-12 ⁸ "Whenever you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat whatever they serve you, ⁹ heal the sick that are there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you!'

¹⁰ But whenever you go into a town and people don't welcome you, go out into its streets and say,

¹¹ 'We're wiping off your town's dust that clings to our feet in protest against you!

But realize this: the kingdom of God is near!'

¹² I tell you, on the last day it will be easier for Sodom than for that town!"

This demand for a decision was laid upon Israel as a NATION.

Samuel Andrews: As the covenant of God with the Jews was a national one, so must also Christ's acceptance or rejection be. From the beginning of their history, God had dealt with the people as a corporate body. Their blessings were national blessings, their punishments were national punishments. What was done by the heads of the nation was regarded as the act of all and involved common responsibility.

Hence, in this greatest and highest act, the acceptance or rejection of His Son, the act must be a national one. It must be done in the name of the whole people by those who acted as their rightful representatives. If those who sat in Moses' seat should receive Him, the way for the further prosecution of His work was at once opened, and under His divine instruction the nation might be purified and made ready for the glorious Kingdom which had been described and foretold by the prophets.

But, if He was rejected by the nation acting through its lawfully constituted heads, this national crime must be followed by national punishment. Individuals might be saved amid the general overthrow, but the people, as such, failing to fulfill God's purpose in their election, must be scattered abroad, and a new people be gathered out of all nations.

It was under the conditions imposed by these great historic facts that the Lord began His ministry among the Jews. He came to a people in covenant with God; a people that God desired to save, and that must, as a people, accept or reject Him."