

09.14.25: Matt 4:17 & 23

A New Kingdom

Title: A New Kingdom

Scripture: Matt 4:17 & 23

Main Idea: The arrival of a new kingdom was the central theme of Jesus' preaching.

Intro:

- New Series intro –
- The word Kingdom – it's everywhere,
 - We'll look at it in our text this morning
 - It's in our church covenant – to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our savior
 - It's on social media, especially as it relates to how we as Christians interact with this world around us
 - It has even made its way into secular discussions over government
 - I saw it on a billboard driving on the interstate yesterday - "my kingdom is not of this world"
 - But at the same time it's absent – I cannot recall but a very few discussions in all of my years of listening to preaching, studying preaching, and preparing to preach in seminary
 - Now sometimes absence is a result of assumption – we assume that everyone just understands and we move on
 - To assume everyone understands as we move into this new series would be a grave mistake
- Significance of the whole concept of the Kingdom of God/Heaven
 - Cannot understand the gospels without grasp of this concept
 - John the Baptist came proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom
 - In our text today we will see that the central theme of Jesus' teaching was the coming of the kingdom
 - ILLUSTRATION of dawn, rising sun, and day
- Misconceptions regarding the whole concept of the Kingdom of God/Heaven
 - Consistently misunderstood by the Jews in Jesus' ministry
 - 1 Sam 8 and Israel's demand for a king vs 7 "they have rejected me as their king"
 - Background of the exile, second temple, intertestamental struggles, and Roman rule
 - Consistently misunderstood by us
 - We are somewhat removed from the world of kings and kingdoms

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- But early English translators lived in a world with a literal king and thus the concept that was appropriate for them has been maintained in words but lost in some sense of meaning
 - Thus consistently misapplied

1) Distinct

Explanation:

- Matthew's use of "kingdom of heaven"
 - Not just a substitute/stand-in for Kingdom of God,
 - but to draw a distinction between kingdoms –
 - literally from "heavens" thus from above and not from earth, or spiritual
- Distinction is clearly not within the believing community but between the believing community and the rest of the world

Application:

- Not a physical kingdom
- Not ushered in by human means

2) Spiritual

Explanation:

- Not a visible, tangible thing for us to see and lay our hands on
- Transition from a visible nation in a geographic place – OT Israel

Application:

- Because is spiritual, means
 - battles are fought on a spiritual level – we do not wage war in the manner and with the tools of the enemy

2 Cor 10:3 ³*For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, ⁴since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments ⁵and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.*

- can never be defeated/destroyed

3) Mysterious

Explanation:

- Because it is spiritual, it is in a sense mysterious
- Matt 13:19 parable of the sower and the one who doesn't understand the word about the kingdom

Application:

- Because is mysterious, we dependent upon God

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- we need help to be able to see it lest it remain hidden from us
- “...realized only through a transcendent and supernatural work of God. The kingdom does not become a reality through the effort and work of human beings.” Schreiner

4) In progress

Explanation:

- “has come”
- Clear expectations in scripture that the ushering in of the kingdom would include the rule of God and his judgment of everyone

Illustration:

- Matt 13:24-30 – wheat and the weeds
- “...Jesus clearly teaches that the kingdom is initiated without being consummated. Hence, there is a messy and unexpected segment of time in which the kingdom of heaven coexists on earth with the kingdom of darkness.” Schreiner
- Matt 13:47 – net and the sorting of the fish

Application:

- Because the kingdom is in progress, we must accept the nature of God’s kingdom coexisting with the enemy’s kingdom for a time

5) Active

Explanation:

- Matt 13:31-33 – Mustard seed and Leaven
- Production of fruit in the parable of the sower – Matt 13:23

Application:

- Because the kingdom is active, we must not fall for the lie that Christians have no influence on this earth
- To the contrary, we are to . . .

6) Priceless

Explanation:

- Of immeasurable value
- Matt 13:44-46 – treasure and the priceless pearl

Application:

- Because the kingdom of God/Heaven is priceless, we should abandon all else in order to grasp the kingdom
- If nothing else becomes evident from the SM, one cannot miss the overall thrust that the kingdom is not for the half-hearted – One must be all in

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Conclusion:

- **Distinct** – not a kingdom ushered in by human hands
- **Spiritual** – we fight spiritually and cannot be defeated
- **Mysterious** – we depend on God: to see it, recognize it, and attain it
- **In-progress** – we live with the mess of two kingdoms growing up together
- **Active** – is not of this world, but in every way is in this world and cannot not have an influence on this world
- **Priceless** – worth it all