

18. WHEN KINGDOM OF GOD MEANS MESSIAH

Metonymy is the substitution of an attribute for the thing meant, ‘crown’ for the king, ‘turf’ for horse racing. In the following verses ‘the kingdom of God’ is interpreted as ‘the king appointed by God,’ which to first-century Jews only meant one thing, the promised Messiah. The kingship was his. It is only in this sense that the kingdom of God is God’s kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news about the Messiah. He had arrived but the kingdom had not. There are several reasons why Jesus expressed himself in this way. Due to the sensitive political situation, he could not openly broadcast the fact that he was God’s appointed king. Using the kingdom of God/Heaven phrases made his message less comprehensible to the Romans and took attention away from himself. However, for faithful Jews, it had the opposite effect. The kingdom of God was their hope of salvation from their oppressors. Hyperbole was frequent in Jesus’ teaching and kingdom terminology also attracted his audience’s attention. While the religious leaders accused him of blasphemy, the faithful followed him in their thousands.

Jesus announces the Messiah’s arrival

Mt 4:17 From that time on, Jesus began to preach, saying: Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven (the Messiah) has come near.

Mt 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom (the Messiah), and healing people from every disease and sickness.

Mt 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom (the Messiah), and healing people from every disease and sickness.

Mt 11:12 Since the time when John the Baptist began his preaching until today, the kingdom of Heaven (the Messiah) is subject to violence, and violent people raid it (attack him).

Mt 12:28 As it's by the power of God's Spirit that I drive out demons, know that the kingdom of God (the Messiah) has come to you.

Mk 1:15 The time has arrived, he said: The kingdom of God (the Messiah) is near. Repent and believe the good news.

Lk 4:43 But he said to them: I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God (the Messiah) to the other towns also, because that is why God sent me.

Lk 8:1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God (the Messiah).

Lk 9:11 He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God (the Messiah) and healed those who needed healing.

Lk 11:20 If my exorcisms are God's workmanship, know that the kingdom of God (the Messiah) has come to you.

Lk 16:16 The law of Moses and the prophetical books were followed until John. Since his time, the good news about the kingdom of God (the Messiah) is proclaimed, and everyone coming to him suffers violence.

Lk 17:20-21 The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God Messiah would come and Jesus replied, saying: The kingdom of God (the Messiah) will not come how people think. People won't say: Look here, or look there, because the kingdom of God (the Messiah) is in your midst.

Jesus' gospel was simply that he was the Messiah. He was sent by God, and he was revealing himself to Israel. The kingdom of God only had significance to the crowds inasmuch as they recognized Jesus to be the Messiah. John's baptism was performed so that Jesus

might be revealed to Israel. There was no kingdom then and it has not arrived since. To say that the kingdom arrived at Jesus' birth or his ascension is not scriptural, it awaits his second coming. Without a king present in the world, how can there be a kingdom? Jesus couldn't say much about his death and resurrection and the gospel of salvation because these events were still future. His Jewish audience was encouraged to follow him, not because of his crucifixion which had not happened yet, but because of who he was, the Messiah.

Others proclaim the Messiah

Mt 3:2 Repent, the kingdom of Heaven (the Messiah) is nearby.

Mt 10:7 Go and proclaim this message, saying: The kingdom of Heaven (the Messiah) is nearby.

Mt 19:12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and eunuchs who were castrated, and some control themselves as eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's (the Messiah's) sake. The one who can accept this should accept it.

Mt 24:14 This good news about the kingdom (the Messiah) will be preached in the entire world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.

Lk 9:2 Then he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God (the Messiah) and to heal the sick.

Lk 9:60 Jesus said to him: Let the dead bury their dead. As for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God (the Messiah).

Lk 10:9 Heal the sick in that town and tell them that the kingdom of God (the Messiah) is nearby to them.

Lk 10:11 Even the dust of your town on our feet, we wipe off as a warning to you. Know for sure of that the kingdom of God Messiah is nearby.

Lk 18:29-30 Then Jesus said to them: I tell you the truth, the person who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the kingdom of God's Messiah's sake will receive much more than that in this present age, and he'll receive eternal life in the coming age.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed the good news about the kingdom of God (the Messiah) and the name of Jesus Christ that Philip preached, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 19:8 Paul frequented the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God (the Messiah).

Acts 20:25 I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom (the Messiah) will ever see me again.

Acts 28:23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day and many more came to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening, he witnessed to them about the kingdom of God (**the** Messiah) from the Law of Moses and the Prophets as he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

Acts 28:31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God (the Messiah) to them and boldly taught about the Lord Jesus Christ without hindrance.

Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the arrival of the Messiah, and they were given power to heal the sick and exorcise demons as evidence that their message was true. Throughout the book of Acts, there is evidence that the apostles proclaimed the Messiah by using kingship terminology. Philip and Paul proclaimed the good news about the Messianic kingdom and made it clear that Jesus was the coming Messiah. Believers had the responsibility of spreading the good news of the kingdom to the whole world, and then the end of the age would come when the Messiah returned. It is the gospel of the kingdom that is preached to the whole world. By preaching Jesus, people from all nations are brought into the monarchy, and when Jesus returns, they'll be revealed to the world. When Jesus said the gospel would be preached in the whole world and then the end would come, he was not talking about the end of the world, but the end of the Church age and the beginning of the new age when many prophecies would be consummated, especially concerning Israel. Many verses refer to the righteous inheriting the kingdom after the second coming. Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in, so the Parousia is not the final

event of this world's history, it is the beginning of a glorious age of regeneration.

Believers understood Jesus to be the Messiah

Mt 13:11 He replied, saying: The mysteries about the kingdom of heaven (the Messiah) have been revealed to you, but not to them.

Mt 13:19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom (the Messiah) and doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and takes away what was sown in their heart.

Mt 13:52 Then he told them: Whenever a teacher of Moses' law becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven (the Messiah), he's like a house owner who brings new and old things out of his storeroom.

Mk 4:11 Then he told them: The mystery about the kingdom of God (the Messiah) has been revealed to you but to those on the outside everything is said in parables.

Lk 8:10 Then he said: The knowledge of the mysteries about the kingdom of God (the Messiah) has been revealed to you, but to others I speak in parables so that they look without seeing and hear without understanding.

Jesus often taught in parables and many people, including his disciples, did not always discern what he was talking about. He told his disciples that the mysteries about the were not for everyone. They were for his followers to understand, not for outsiders. So, he explained his parables to them. The 'kingdom of God' message is a message about the Messiah. His mysteries include his identity, ministry, purpose, salvation, and coming kingdom. Satan does his best to keep people from understanding these things.

The Messiah is to be sought

Mt 6:33 Seek first *his* kingdom (the Messiah) and how he puts people right with God, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Mt 13:44 The Kingdom of Heaven (the Messiah) is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy, he went and sold all that he had and bought that field.

Mt 13:45 The kingdom of heaven (the Messiah) is also like this. A merchant was looking for fine pearls...

Mk 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came. He was a prominent man among the Jewish leaders and was himself expecting the kingdom of God (the Messiah) to come. He went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Lk 12:31 But seek his kingdom (the Messiah), and these things will be given to you as well.

Lk 23:51 He had not consented to what they decided to do. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and was expecting the kingdom of God (the Messiah) to come.

The Messiah is so important that Jesus told the Jews that seeking him and understanding how he makes people righteous are of prime importance. If you are made righteous through faith in Christ, you become an heir of the kingdom, and those who inherit the kingdom will be dressed in white linen, symbolic of their righteousness. Finding the kingdom, kingship under the Messiah, and reigning with him, is like finding a great treasure or a very expensive jewel. It is worth surrendering all you own to obtain it.

The Messiah will return to reign

Mt 6:10 May your kingdom (the Messiah) come when your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

Mt 16:28 Truly I tell you, some people standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom royal power.

Mk 9:1 And he said to them: Truly I tell you, some people are standing here will not die without seeing the kingdom of God (the Messiah) coming with power.

Lk 9:27 I tell you the truth, some people standing here will not die before they see the kingdom of God (the Messiah) (come).

Lk 11:2 May your kingdom (the Messiah) come.

Lk 21:31 So also, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God (the Messiah) is near.

As Meyer says: Let the kingdom of the Messiah appear! (Mt 6:10). (Meyer's NT Commentary.) When Christians pray "Your kingdom come," they should be thinking about the Lord's return and his reign on Earth when the will of God will be done during the millennium. The transfiguration occurred a week after Jesus announced to his disciples that some of them would not die before they saw the Son of Man coming in his royal power. He was giving Peter, James, and John a glimpse of his future glory. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this supernatural appearance of Jesus to three of his disciples, and the terminology each one uses is different. Matthew describes the transfiguration as the Son of Man coming in his kingdom (in his kingship or royal power). Mark describes the same event as the kingdom of God coming with power, thus equating the kingdom of God with the Son of Man, and Luke says they'll see the kingdom of God (the Messiah) coming. By understanding kingdom as 'kingship' or 'royal power' and 'Son of Man' as a title for Jesus as the Messiah, what Matthew says is clear. To understand Mark's terminology, we must understand 'the kingdom of God' as a metonym for the Messiah himself. The disciples saw Jesus in his Messianic glory. Luke says they'll see the kingdom of God, which would be hard to understand if we didn't have Matthew's wording. Luke says that Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about his departure (Gr. exodus), meaning the events surrounding his death.