

#“The Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ”

Part 10

Matthew 3

**Introduction:** To begin with tonight I want to look back over some of what we have considered so far in our study of the Kingdom.

1. The Kingdom in the Garden
2. The Abrahamic Covenant
3. The Sub Covenants
4. The Mosaic Covenant
5. The Micro Example of the Kingdom seen in Israel
6. The Divided Kingdom
7. The Babylonian Captivity
8. The Times of the Gentiles
9. The Words of the Prophets

Tonight in our study we are stepping out of the Old Testament and into the New Testament.

➤ **The Offer of the Kingdom to First Century Israel**

I want to draw your attention to Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2.

**Daniel 2:37-40**

<sup>37</sup> *Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.*

<sup>38</sup> *And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.*

<sup>39</sup> *And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.*

<sup>40</sup> *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

When the Gospels open up Israel is still in the Times of the Gentiles and the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom is now in place and the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom is Rome. Rome has placed Israel under a terrible tax burden, and they also occupied their land and they had taken away the right of Israel to execute their own criminals. Then along with that Israel has gone through some 400 years since they have heard from God. It is against this back ground that Jesus Christ comes on the scene. It is against this back ground that the offer of the Kingdom is extended to Israel. It will be offered through John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Twelve and the Seventy.

**Notice Matthew 3:1-2**

This is the offer by John the Baptist. Let me show you the other offers before we examine the offer closer.

**Matthew 4:17**

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Matthew 10:5a, 7**

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying,

<sup>7</sup> And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Luke 10:1, 9**

After these things the LORD appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

<sup>9</sup> And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

Matthew refers to the offer as the Kingdom of Heaven and Luke refers to the offer as the Kingdom of God. These two titles point to the same thing. There are many who want to say that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are two different Kingdoms but that is not the case.

- a. **The definition - How do we know this is a reference to the same Kingdom we studied in the Old Testament?**

It is also important to note the meaning behind the two titles. There are many Bible teachers and scholars who teach that the Kingdom of Heaven is a spiritual kingdom. They

do not see the Kingdom here in the Gospels as the same Kingdom spoken of in the Old Testament. The problem with that teaching is that no where in the Gospels do we see this Kingdom mentioned by John, Jesus, the Twelve and the Seventy defined as a spiritual kingdom. For this reason it is essential that we interpret the Kingdom as the Old Testament does because there is not one verse that tells us it is not the same.

Notice the words of Cocoris on a Biblical principle:

***"The nature of communication is such that once authors define a term, they are obligated to use that term the same way, until they notify the readers otherwise."***

Therefore, since the "Kingdom" mentioned in the Gospels is undefined we must then see it as the very same literal earthly Kingdom as defined in the Old Testament. The Kingdom in the Gospels is not a spiritual Kingdom, but it is the very Kingdom that the prophets wrote about that is promised to the Nation of Israel.

Notice the words of Pink:

*"In Matthew 3:1-2 we read, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"-it was "at hand," because the King Himself was about to appear in the midst of the Jews. When John said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," what do you suppose his Jewish hearers understood by that expression? They had the whole of the Old Testament in their hands, but that is all which they had. Obviously, all their thoughts would naturally turn to the kingdom which the Son of Man was to receive in heaven at the hands of the Ancient of days."*

Let us notice where their minds would have gone when they heard John's Words:

**Daniel 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

<sup>14</sup> *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

**b. The title - Why is it called the Kingdom of Heaven?**

We need to raise a question before we can move on, "Why is the Kingdom called the Kingdom of Heaven? This title is not found in the Old Testament, and this has caused many

to see this as something different. The answer to this is seen in Daniel's letter and his interpretation of the dream.

**Daniel 2:39-45**

<sup>39</sup> *And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.*

<sup>40</sup> *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

<sup>41</sup> *And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.*

<sup>42</sup> *And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*

<sup>43</sup> *And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*

<sup>44</sup> *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

<sup>45</sup> *Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.*

The Kingdom is called the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God because it a Kingdom from the God of heaven. The title "Kingdom of Heaven" is a reference to the source [not location] of the Kingdom. Therefore we can see why both titles have the same meaning. It is interesting to note that Matthew used the title "Kingdom of God" only 5 times and he used the title "Kingdom of Heaven" 32 times. The reason was because he was a Jew, and the Jews were very reluctant to write the name of God.

Notice the words of John Walvoord:

*"What did John mean by 'kingdom of heaven'? While the precise phrase is not found in the Old Testament, it is based on Old Testament terminology. Nebuchadnezzar, for instance,*

referred to God as the 'King of heaven' (Dan 4:37). Daniel had predicted that the climax of world history would come with the advent of the Son of Man, who would be given an everlasting kingdom. This was likewise to be fulfilled by the prediction of Daniel 2:44. Matthew, alone of New Testament writers, uses 'the kingdom of heaven' and rarely uses 'the kingdom of God,' which is often used in parallel passages in the other gospels and throughout the New Testament. Most expositors consider the two terms identical."

c. The meaning - What does it mean that the Kingdom was at hand?

Notice Matthew 3:1-2 again.

What did John mean when he said the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand? He did not mean that the Kingdom was about to appear or that it was about to start, or that it started. When he said the Kingdom was at hand, he meant that the King was coming. Notice again what Jesus, the Twelve and the Seventy said.

**Matthew 4:17**

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Matthew 10:5a, 7**

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying,

<sup>7</sup> And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Luke 10:1-9**

After these things the LORD appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

<sup>9</sup> And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

These all meant that the King was present. The Kingdom was near because the King was on the earth. The Kingdom was being offered to the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews and if they would have repented and accepted Jesus Christ as the King the Times of the Gentiles would have ended at that time and the Kingdom of our Lord would have encompassed the entire earth.

**Deuteronomy 17:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;*

*<sup>15</sup> Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.*

Here in Deuteronomy 17:15 this verse ultimately points to Jesus Christ, and this is the condition which Israel must fulfill in order to possess the blessings and the Kingdom. So, had the Jews accepted Jesus as their King the Kingdom would have been established.

This thought now raises a very important question, "What about Nebuchadnezzar's dream?"

#### **Daniel 2:40-44**

*<sup>40</sup> And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.*

*<sup>41</sup> And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.*

*<sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.*

*<sup>43</sup> And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*

*<sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

Daniel says the Kingdom will be set up in the days of the ten confederate kings who serve under the Anti-Christ so how could Israel have accepted Jesus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and then seen the Kingdom established? Let us understand that God knew they would reject Jesus when He gave Daniel the prophecy. But it was not that they **COULD NOT** accepted Jesus it was that they **WOULD NOT** accept Him. The offer was there for them,

but they allowed it to get away. Can you imagine being that close as to have the King in their presence and then turn away?

d. The offer - Who was the offer of the Kingdom presented to?

**Matthew 10:5-7**

<sup>5</sup> *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

<sup>6</sup> *But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

<sup>7</sup> *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

The offer of the Kingdom was only for the Jews.

**Matthew 15:21-28**

<sup>21</sup> *Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

<sup>22</sup> *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

<sup>23</sup> *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

<sup>24</sup> *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

<sup>25</sup> *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

<sup>26</sup> *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

<sup>27</sup> *And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*

<sup>28</sup> *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

**Conclusion:** Next week we are going to look at how some people misunderstand this offer, and we are going to also look at "The Gospel of the Kingdom." Is it the same as the Gospel of Grace?