

The Gospel of the Kingdom

The End Time Message

Introduction

According to Jesus, one of the signs of the end, that is, the close of this age, is the completion of the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations.

Matthew 24:14 NKJV And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

It seems to me then that the 'end time message' is the message contained in the gospel of the Kingdom. That makes it very important that we determine exactly what the gospel of the Kingdom really is and if we are actually preaching it.

The Gospel According to Jesus

It is very clear from the Scriptures that Jesus preached 'the gospel of the kingdom' as evidenced by the verse following. This is but one of many verses that refer to the gospel of the kingdom in the ministry of Jesus.

Matthew 4:23 NKJV And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Jesus even said that the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, that is, about to appear. Because of this, He said that it is time to "Repent and believe in the gospel."

Mark 1:14-15 NKJV Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, (15) and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Since He was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, then it seems reasonable to say that the gospel that we are to believe in is the gospel of the Kingdom. What exactly did he mean by this? He made this statement at the beginning of His ministry, long before His atoning death.

The Message of the Kingdom

In Luke chapter four we have the details of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The chapter begins right after He was baptized by John in the Jordan and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him. He was then led, literally driven, by the Spirit into the wilderness to face temptation from the Enemy. After overcoming all aspects of temptation, He came out of the wilderness in the power of Spirit.

He went into the wilderness full of the Holy Spirit and He came out in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The difference between being full of the Spirit and having the power of the Spirit is learning to overcome the flesh and the enemy.

After coming out of the wilderness, Jesus begins to teach and goes down to His old home town of Nazareth and goes into the synagogue. There He opens the scroll of Isaiah and reads this passage.

Luke 4:17-21 NKJV And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: (18) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED; (19) TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." (20) Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. (21) And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

I am sure that this passage from Isaiah had been read many times in this synagogue as either a historical fact or as a future prophecy. However, no one had ever said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled". They all recognized that this passage dealt with Messiah. To say that it is fulfilled is to say that Messiah is here.

In this passage from Isaiah we have the description of the anointing of the Spirit. Jesus told us that we are to do the works that He did and even greater after the Holy Spirit comes.¹ That means that we are expected to be anointed by the Spirit in the same manner that Jesus was anointed to do the same type of work that He did.

The anointing was on Messiah, the King, for His work. We could say then that this is the 'anointing for the Kingdom' for the King and His Kingdom are inseparable. The passage lists specific work that comes from this anointing of the Spirit.

- To preach the gospel to the poor
- To heal the brokenhearted
- To Proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind
- To set free those who are oppressed
- To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

These five areas divide into two categories: 1) the spoken word and 2) action as a result of the anointing. The spoken word category includes preaching the gospel and proclaiming liberty and acceptance. The actions that accompany the spoken word includes healing and setting free.

So, from this we can reach a couple of conclusions:

1. the anointing of the Spirit involves both *saying* and *doing*, and
2. the gospel that Jesus preached to the poor was the gospel of the Kingdom.

As we continue on in Luke chapter four, Jesus leaves Nazareth where they rejected Him as Messiah

¹ John 14:12

and rejected His word about the Kingdom and went to Capernaum and began to teach and they were all amazed at the teaching.

Luke 4:36 NASB And amazement came upon them all, and they *began* talking with one another saying, "What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out."

Jesus wasn't just *saying* but He was also *doing*. Both His word and His actions were what produced the amazement. We know that the "message" was the gospel of the Kingdom, but, the "message" also included the demonstration of the Kingdom by the Spirit. The Kingdom is not in word only and the "message" is not in word only. Here we understand that the "message" is more than the words spoken—the "message" contains action also. God confirmed the word with the "message" of deliverance. Those who can't understand the words may quickly understand the demonstration.

Paul used the same pattern for the message of the gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus did. Look at some of the things that Paul said about the gospel of the Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 4:20 NKJV (20) For the kingdom of God *is not in word but in power.*

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NKJV (4) And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. **(5)** that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 NKJV (5) For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

It would seem that the gospel of the Kingdom is accompanied by the demonstration of the Kingdom by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Demonstration of the Kingdom

We have been told by the institutional church that Jesus came so that we could go to heaven. If we accept Him into our heart we will miss hell and go to heaven. However, Jesus NEVER said anything like that. He tells us in Luke chapter four one of the primary reasons that He was sent by the Father.

Luke 4:43 NKJV but He said to them, "**I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.**"

We have so lost focus on God's purpose that we don't see anything about the Kingdom and don't seem to understand anything about the gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus continually spoke of the Kingdom and taught about the Kingdom and demonstrated the gospel of the Kingdom as part of His mission from the Father. In Him we have the pattern that we are to follow.

Luke 5:17 NKJV Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to

heal them.

In this verse we see the pattern for the message of the gospel of the Kingdom. He was teaching about the Kingdom until the power of the Lord came to heal. The message has two parts—the *saying* and the *doing*. We teach and preach the Kingdom until the power of God comes to confirm with signs following, to heal and to deliver the people. If we deliver both parts of “the message” our faith doesn't rest in men's wisdom, a reasoned approach to salvation, or fancy oratory; but, instead, rests in the power of God.

Jesus makes it very clear that the testimony of the demonstration of the power of the King and His Kingdom is the validation of the word spoken when He answered John's disciples concerning His Messiahship.

Matthew 11:2-6 NKJV And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples (3) and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (4) Jesus answered and said to them, "**Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: (5) *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* (6) **And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**"**

People should be able to hear *and* see the message of the Kingdom. However, we have neglected this pattern today. We have developed a different style of evangelism that is based on a mental assent to a reasoned argument from the written word but doesn't demonstrate the power of the King.

The Gospel According to Paul

In Paul's evangelism we clearly see the pattern established by Jesus as revealed in Paul's own words in the verses quoted earlier in the lesson. Paul also gives us a complete definition of the gospel.

Romans 14:8-9 NKJV For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Romans 14:11 NKJV For it is written: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."

In these verses we have a summation of the Gospel—Jesus died, rose, lived again, and became Lord and because He lives every knee will bow to Him as King. Lordship and Kingship are Kingdom concepts. This is the gospel of the Kingdom that Paul preached.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NKJV (1) Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, (2) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (4) and that He

was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Paul delivered the gospel that he had received. What he had received came directly from Jesus. The gospel is that 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 2) Christ was buried, 3) Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

The results of the Corinthians receiving the gospel is 1) they stand in the gospel, that is, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; 2) by their stand in the gospel they are saved—**IF** they hold on to the gospel preached to them. If they don't hold on to or stand in the gospel, they will have believed in vain, that is, uselessly.

Romans 1:16 NKJV For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

This is the gospel that is “*the power of God to salvation*”. Anything less than this gospel falls short of the power of God.

Paul preached the gospel in the same way that Jesus did—by both *saying* and *doing*.

Romans 15:19 NKJV in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 ALT (Analytical-Literal Translation) (4) And my word [*or, message*] and my proclamation [*were*] not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of [*the*] Spirit and of power, (5) so that your* faith should not be in [*the*] wisdom of people, but in the power of God!

Notice that our faith should be in the power of God, that is the validation of the Lordship of Jesus. Where did we ever get the idea that we were not to have any evidence for our faith? Is not our Lord alive today? Does He not still work today? Does He not still validate His word today?

Another Gospel

We have definitely divided the gospel of the Kingdom. We have definitely separated the word of the gospel from the demonstration and power of the gospel. We have diluted the gospel from the Lordship of Jesus to an easy grace without any requirements for change. There is not any doubt in my mind that we are no longer preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. Now the real question is, are we guilty of preaching a different gospel with a different Jesus?

2 Corinthians 11:4 NKJV (4) For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Jesus told us that He was sent to preach the Kingdom of God, as we saw earlier in this lesson. Paul gives us another reason that Jesus came.

Galatians 1:4 NKJV [*Our Lord Jesus Christ*] who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Any gospel that does not have in it the provision of deliverance from this present evil age is not the gospel of the Kingdom but another, different gospel. Paul says that a different gospel is not even a gospel at all, but some want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:6-9 NKJV I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, (7) which is not another; [*not a gospel*] but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (9) As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Paul declares that one who preaches a different or perverted gospel should be cursed. That is some strong language. We need to pay attention to what we are preaching.

Our church gospel has resulted in entire denominations that fit into the category of people described by Paul when he wrote to Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:5 NKJV having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

That is what we get when we separate the message from the demonstration—form without substance. Our denominations exhibit a form of godliness; however, it doesn't even match the righteousness of the Pharisees and Jesus said our righteousness must exceed that to enter the Kingdom.²

None of the gospels that our modern ministers preach fit the criteria of the gospel of the Kingdom. None of these are the gospel of the Kingdom: the gospel of prosperity, gospel of the church, gospel of salvation, gospel of grace, or the gospel of success and happiness.

The gospel of the Kingdom declares that there is a King and a Kingdom, that every knee will bow to the King, that everyone will give an account to the King and that only those who do His will are acceptable to the Kingdom. This is the end time message and it is the *demonstration* of this message that is the witness to all of the nations.³ Until we do this our mission is not complete. Until we do this the end will not come.

There are some running around the world carrying a gospel of forgiveness or some other form of the gospel. They are urgently trying to reach all people groups with this gospel so that they can fulfill the command of Matthew 24:14. However, we cannot do the work of the Lord in the flesh. To fulfill the command of Matthew 24:14 requires more than the word. It requires the demonstration. That cannot be done in the flesh but requires the power of the Spirit. It is the Lord who confirms His word with signs following.

2 Matthew 5:20

3 Matthew 24:14

Until we can learn to both *say* and *do*, we cannot fulfill the commandment.

*The next lesson in this series will be
“Disciples of the Kingdom”
and deals with how we learn to say and do the gospel.*