

# The Kingdom-Driven Life #8 The Book of Matthew

## The Message, Messengers, and Ministry of the Kingdom of God

Matthew 4:12-25

### I. Introduction: A Review and Overview

#### A. Review:

1. With the baptism of Jesus, the ministry of John is coming to an end.
2. After His baptism, Jesus defeats the “tempter” in the “duel in the desert.”
3. Now, we come to the “release” of the ministry of Jesus.

#### B. Overview of Matthew 4: Three Primary Thoughts

1. The Message: The Proclamation of the Kingdom (4:12-17)
2. The Messengers: The Call of the Disciples (4:18-21)
3. The Mission: Ministering to the Masses (4:22-25)

### II. The Launching of Jesus’ Earthly Ministry

#### A. The Message

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

"In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali,  
beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River,  
in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,  
the people who sat in darkness  
have seen a great light.

And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow,  
a light has shined."

From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the  
Kingdom of Heaven is near."

Matthew 4:11-17 NLT

#### B. The Fullness of Time

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,  
made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,  
Galatians 4:4-5 KJV

1. The Bible tells us Jesus was ordained as the “Lamb of God” before the “foundation of the world”. (See Revelation 13:8)
2. This means God literally “waited” 4,000 years after Adam to come to earth as the babe of Bethlehem.
3. Then, Jesus “waited” thirty years in obscurity before setting forth in His earthly ministry. Oh, the patience and longsuffering of God on our behalf!
4. In some mysterious way, the arrest of John the Baptist (and thereby, the “arrest” of His message), seems to be the “release point” for Jesus!
5. John’s message was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near”. When that message is shut up, it is released afresh in the ministry of Jesus! It’s the same message!
6. Notice that Jesus’ first ministry act is to *preach!!!*
7. If the principle holds true, doesn’t it make sense that Jesus’ (physical) departure from earth ought to “release” the preaching ministry of His disciples? And shouldn’t our message be the same?
8. Notice, also that all this is a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy:
  - a. In “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Isaiah 9:1)
  - b. To “enlarge the nation of Israel” (9:3)
  - c. To “break the yoke of slavery” (9:4)

*(But the prophecy goes on!)*

**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
 And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
 And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
 Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.  
 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,  
 On the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
 To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness  
 From then on and forevermore.  
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.  
 Isaiah 9:6-7 NASB**

9. Now we know His “government” is the Kingdom of God!\*

*It is almost universally agreed that the terms “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God” mean and refer to the same thing. Matthew’s gospel uses “Kingdom of Heaven” because the Jews did not like to use God’s name in ordinary speaking and writing, considering it holy. Matthew, a Levitical Jew, writing his gospel (primarily) to Jews, therefore favors the term “Kingdom of Heaven”. In these studies, we use the terms interchangeably.*

### **C. The Messengers**

**One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him.**

**A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.**

**Matthew 4:18-22 NLT**

1. The term “Rabbi” applied to good teachers and preachers of the day, and each Rabbi had “followers” or “disciples”.
2. Jesus here follows the pattern in the calling of His first disciples.
3. Other passages reveal this was not their first encounter with Jesus; but this was different:

**The ready response of the fishermen here...indicates the authority of Jesus summons. It was not their first meeting. (John 1:35-42; Luke 5:3)...but it was the first time Jesus had demanded their literally leaving home to join Him in His itinerant ministry. It did not involve disposing of home and property or a severing of family ties...but it would bring a complete disruption of their normal way of life.**

**R.T. France**

4. The message demands *messengers*.
5. The calling of the disciples is a model and pattern for the “call” of the Gospel today.
6. Next, we see the purpose and intention of the message and the messengers...reaching people!

#### **D. The Ministry (Mission) of the Message and Messengers**

**Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon-possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. Large crowds followed him wherever he went— people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.**

**Matthew 4:23-25 NLT**

1. The fishermen were called to “fish” for people!
2. The Gospel of the Kingdom is *more* than a message of salvation (of the soul)...it *includes* (physical) healing and (spiritual) deliverance from demonic forces!
3. The Kingdom of God, when it “comes near”, displaces sin, spiritual darkness, and demonic forces!
4. These “signs” of the Kingdom hearken all the way back to the Old Testament, where Moses was commissioned by God to “deliver” Israel from Egyptian bondage!

**But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The Lord never appeared to you?'"**

**Then the Lord asked him, "What is that in your hand?"**

**"A shepherd's staff," Moses replied.**

**"Throw it down on the ground," the Lord told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back. Then the Lord told him, "Reach out and grab its tail." So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand. "Perform this sign," the Lord told him. "Then they will believe that the Lord, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you."**

**Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out again, his hand was white as snow with a severe skin disease. 7 "Now put your hand back into your cloak," the Lord said. So Moses put his hand back in, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body. The Lord said to Moses, "If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign. And if they don't believe you or listen to you even after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground."**

**Exodus 4:1-9 NLT**

5. The term "kingdom" is *governmental*, which implies power and authority!

Notice what Jesus told the disciples right after His resurrection:

**And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. "**

**So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.**

**Mark 4:14-20 NASB**

6. In the Book of Acts, notice how the disciple's ideas about the Kingdom of God had to be corrected from the "political" to the spiritual:

**So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?"**

**He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

**After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"**

**Acts 1:6-11NLT**

### **III. Applications**

#### **A. The Message**

1. The central message of Jesus was the Kingdom of God.
  - a. Which came *definitively* with Jesus
  - b. Is now advancing *progressively* through His church and disciples
  - c. Will be expressed *finally* at His coming and the Last Judgment
2. This message is governmental and relates to God's rightful authority over all things.
3. There is no proper warrant anywhere that our message should be, or indeed can be, any different from His.

#### **B. The Messengers**

1. The call of Jesus, as defined in the mission of CCC, is to help people become disciples of Jesus by answering:
  - The call to Christ
  - The call to community
  - The call to cultivation of Christ-like character
  - The commission as His representatives in this world
2. The equipping of the saints for ministry is the job of the 5-fold ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

#### **C. The Mission/Ministry of the Kingdom**

1. The purpose of answering His call is to reach others.
2. The means, terms and conditions are the same.
3. The primary equipping for witnessing is the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. The authentication of the Gospel of the Kingdom includes salvation, healing and deliverance...anything less than that will never do.