



Empowering People to Change the World

We are Citizens of the Kingdom of God

Steve Holt

Introduction to Matthew and the Kingdom of God

- We do not have a concept of the Kingdom because we all grew up in a democracy with a president, congress and the freedom to vote.
- A King owns everything. It is all His. The King is not voted in, He is birthed in and the Kingdom is His inheritance.
- The Bible is all about Kingdom.
- God is called a King, King of Glory, an Ancient King—the oldest One in existence. He was not voted in and He cannot be voted out.
- The Bible, the Constitution of the Kingdom of God, calls Him the “King of Glory” which means He is the King of the whole universe, the universe He created. He created the heaven and the earth in order to extend His kingdom from heaven to this planet.

o He is the first King, the King of all kings, but He also created children who are supposed to be kings over the earth. So He is the King of all kings, which are you and me.

o He is the King of Kings, which means He is the King over us.

o All Kingdoms have a King and Lord. All Kingdoms have a constitution, and God has given us His Constitution, and that Constitution is this Book.

o All Kingdoms have laws that govern the Kingdom.

o All Kingdoms have symbols, code of ethics, body of laws and keys.

o The Keys of the Kingdom—authority to access government power that opens doors.

The Gospel of Matthew is all about the Kingdom of God

- The phrase the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of heaven is used 32 times in the book of Matthew, more than any of the other gospel writers.

- This book is written mainly, not exclusively, to Jews. Matthew was once a tax collector and IRS agent of the Romans, was converted to a Jesus follower, then became convinced that Jesus was the long-promised Messiah.
- Matthew is writing to Jews who do not yet believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

o They were expecting a Political Savior.

o A Promised King like King David.

o They read the scriptures and identified the Messiah as a King of the Jews and Palestine who would break the power of Rome and bring them a free nation like they had once enjoyed under David.

o So, Matthew has chosen to represent the Messiah as a King, not the King of the Jews only but a King for all of the world.

o But Matthew begins by winning their hearts and minds by identifying a Royal line, a Kingly line for Jesus.

- Matthew writes in a strategic way as he presents Jesus as the Messiah King:

1) Beginning with calling Jesus, “Christ”, which is not Jesus’ last name but rather means “the anointed one.” Kings were always anointed with oil. We see this with David being anointed by Samuel.

2) Matthew identifies a Kingly royal line, genealogy of Jesus, relating Jesus’s heritage to the two most powerful leaders in Jewish history: Abraham and David.

Matthew 1:1-17

- The design by Matthew is to win the mind of the unbelieving Jew that Jesus is the “son of Abraham” and “son of David.”

- Abraham and David were at the time, the great trustees of the Promise.
- Abraham was considered the founder of the Jewish race and David, the greatest and most powerful of all the Kings of Israel.

- The Jews would never accept a Messiah who was not from the line of Abraham and David. This is not only a son of David, but a son of David whose “shoulders the government was to be” and the son of Abraham, “the father of many nations.”
- You will note how Matthew slips in the fact that Jesus was born from Mary, and her husband was Joseph, not Joseph being identified as the father of Jesus because Jesus was fathered by the Holy Spirit which comes next.

Vs. 18-25

- Not only was it important to know the Royal Line of Jesus, but also the Prophetic significance of Jesus’ very birth.
- Jesus came through the womb of a virgin, Mary—meaning Jesus the Anointed One was fully man, but He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, not the seed of man, but the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.
- Matthew, more than any other writer, gives us the complexity of the situation—not glossed over or overlooked. Matthew wants us to understand that this really happened and the authenticity is found in how Joseph must deal with it.
- This all happened after Mary returned from her time with Elizabeth, and everyone can see that she is pregnant. What a dilemma but also Matthew is presenting the humility of how Christ the King came.
- Matthew is working to dispel the notion held by the Jews of a Conquering Political Messiah King, but rather to present a humble, suffering servant as found in Isaiah 52 and 53.
- This is all of prophetic significance:
 - o Angels intervening
 - o Dreams
 - o The quoting of the biblical Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah.

o Isaiah was a prophet 700 years before Christ and yet he is quoted throughout as one of the key prophetic writers of the coming King.

o Matthew is presenting a King the Jews never expected; look at the names given to Jesus in just chapter 1 Jesus, the Christ, the Anointed One Jesus, son of David Jesus, son of Abraham, Jesus, the one who will save His people from their sins Immanuel, “God with us.”

So, as we study through Matthew, let’s define the kingdom. What is the Kingdom of God?

A Kingdom is not a democracy; it is not a religion; it is not a republic—there is no president.

A definition of the Kingdom of God: “King—Dom,” The King’s Domain. The governing influence of The King, God, over His territory, impacting it with His mind, His will, His purpose, His intention; producing a citizenry of people who express His culture and reflect His nature.

3 Parts to this definition:

- . **1 The governing influence of The King, Jesus, over His territory,**
- . **2 Impacting it with His mind, His will, His purpose, His intention;**
- . **3 Producing a citizenry of people who express His culture and reflect His nature.**

• The Kingdom is influenced by the mind of the King, not the people of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is also referred to as the Good

News, not “Good Views.” Your opinion, my opinion does not hold any sway in the Kingdom of God.

- We are taught to pray in this book: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done!” Not “My kingdom come and My will be done.”

- In other words, from a Kingdom perspective, all things within the Kingdom of God are affected and impacted by the character of the King.
- The Kingdom does not have members—like the Rotary Club, or a church, or a Fitness Club—It produces a Citizenry that express the culture and reflect the nature of the King.

Citizens of the Kingdom of God express the Culture and Nature of the King

- Glory—kavad in Hebrew, has the meaning of “importance,” “weight,” “deference” or “heaviness”, but primarily kavod means “**glory**,” “respect,” “honor” and “majesty.” In translating the Hebrew Bible, the **Greek** word used is δόξα, doxa.
- “Nature,” same idea as the word “glory!” We reflect His glory, the full weight of His nature! He wants to fill the earth with His nature! All of the earth filled with His glory, His nature!
- Adam lost that nature when he disobeyed God. All of the planets and nature are waiting for the coming of the nature of God through the manifest sons of God. Man has been covered up with corruption but the animals and the plants know what Adam used to look like.

o We lost our True Self, our Kingly nature in the Garden.

o Jesus came to recover our true nature as Priests and Kings by being the Sinless Anointed One, the King of all kings.

o Jesus said that He came to reveal the glory of God! And “may the earth be filled with the glory of God.”

o People should be able to look at us and see what heaven is like by our lifestyle, our attitudes and our purposes, our cultural responses, our disposition.

- Not religion! Jesus did not come to form a new religion. Isn't it interesting that the 3 mains world religions all have Abraham as their father. And even

Abraham did not come to form a religion, but rather a people. Abraham gave us a people, a citizenship.

o The Lord said to Abraham, ***“I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you...”*** (Genesis 17:6-7)

o Abraham was not called by God to form Judaism, Islam or Christianity but a Covenant People.

- Jesus is forming a Covenant People of the Kingdom!
- Religion produces a system that people try to follow; a Kingdom produces a culture, a lifestyle that is natural. God does not want us just following Laws written upon tablets but Laws written upon our mind and heart.
Romans 14:17 *“The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”*

• If we are in the culture of the Kingdom, we will demonstrate righteousness, peace and joy!

o We love one another because that is the culture of the kingdom not because we have to or it is a law for us to follow.

o We forgive because it is our culture.

o We work out our differences because we have a culture of right relationships.

• Religion is the #1 thing that opposes the Kingdom. Jesus never had a problem with sinners; he had a problem with religious people!

- The Gospel of Matthew is all about God’s love for those whose hearts are directed toward the Kingdom of God and God’s opposition for those whose hearts are shackled to religion.
- In Matthew 23 Jesus rebukes the Scribes and Pharisees because they are actually blocking the Kingdom from people:

- o You lock it up. You do not want to enter it and block those who want to get in.
- o They are hypocrites who do not even do what they say we should do.
- o They put heavy burdens on people and want to be seen by men.
- o ***“But woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in” (vs. 13)***

- Jesus never entered a religious group. He never started a religion. He was not a religious man.
- He said at His trial, “I’m a king,” but he would not answer their questions because it was a religious and political trial. Jesus was not religious.
- Jesus said he could not find faith in Israel, but he found it in a Kingdom man, a Centurion, a Roman, who got it because he was a man of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is the Most Radical Proposal ever proposed to the heart, mind and allegiance of Man.

- **It gathers up everything good in any system of thought.**
- **It fulfills the good, cleanses the evil and goes beyond anything ever thought of or dreamed of by man.**
- **It could be argued that the Kingdom of God is the ONLY message Jesus preached!**

E. Stanley Jones in his book, *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*, writes:

Man need nothing so much as he needs something to bring life together into total meaning and total goal. Life for the modern man in

East and West needs something to give total meaning to an otherwise fragmented life. He needs an absolute from which he can work down to the relativism of our day, as master light of all his seeing. The Kingdom of God is man's total answer to man's total need.