

Matthew 7:7-8

Pray

- Why would Matthew (a Jew) mention the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God over 50 time in his gospel?

Not only mentioning it but focusing on Jesus' statement that above everything else in your life you are to "seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness FIRST".

The very first thing before anything else.

Jesus even goes on to state that if you do this the Father (King of the Kingdom) will provide what you need to live while you are seeking His will every day. Then you can stop worrying about the things that the people who are not in the kingdom worry about.

- What Jesus said is important but why is Matthew using this phrase so many times?

I think sometimes there are practical and logical things we miss when reading scripture.

If you were a Jew in Israel around 30 AD there were some things that were driving the thoughts and desires of the nation.

1. Your government was under the control of the Roman empire.
 - a. There were Roman troops all around, you were heavily taxed, and you were living under the Roman rules and laws which were not your own.

2. Every male Jew went to Synagogue school up to about 12 years of age and they knew much of the Hebrews scriptures from memory.

- i. In particular the book of Danial.
 1. Danial was very clear when the Messiah would appear and around 30 A.D. everyone was watching.
- ii. They were watching for the Messiah but even more than that!

1. In Danial chapter 2 he is given the answer to a dream that king Nebuchadnezzar had been plagued with causing him to not be able to sleep.

2. Danial 2:24-35 & 44

3. The prophecy stated that God would establish a kingdom that would put an end to all others and last forever filling the whole earth. The kingdom was the rock that God carved out of the mountain. (Jesus told Peter that on this rock he would establish the church. I don't think that was lost on Peter. Peter and all the other were looking for the Rock.)

The Jews hated the Romans and were looking for the Rock to crush them. The key phrase in verse Danial 2:44 is that God would setup a Kingdom that would never be destroyed.

So, when you mentioned “kingdom of God” the people thought of Danial chapter 2.

Jesus used this term with the Jew to cause them to pay close attention. Think about this: if you were a Jew in the audience and you saw this man heal people, cast out demons, feed large groups of people, and with authority tell you that the Kingdom was here and you need to repent and believer what would you do?

The problem is that they were looking for the Rock in Danial that would crush the Romans. All the while ignoring the prophecy in Isaiah 53.

Read: **Isaiah 53**

- Isn't this like us?

We are impatient, we want the end result, we want the rewards skipping over the things we don't like.

The Jews of Jesus day knew Isaiah 53, but they wanted Danial 2. They wanted **Zechariah 9:9**

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

And when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, they wanted the Kingdom in Danial 2, all the seemingly good things.

But this is not what was prophesied, and this is not what Jesus taught to expect in being part of the kingdom.

What Jesus taught right from the beginning was that you needed to “repent” of your reliance and desire for the other kingdom.

- In other words, you are believing the lie of Satan that you can control your life. This is not possible; we know it but yet we try.

What Jesus was teaching was that if you want to be part of the kingdom of God then there are somethings that you should expect.

- **Matthew 5:3** – you will be “poor in spirit” – meaning that you understand that you have no ability to save yourself (pride in your own abilities or works) rather your richness in spirit is in God and his ability to save you.
- **Matthew 5:10** – Since we are living in the territory of the other kingdom we should expect to be recognized and attacked for what we believe and how we live.
- **Matthew 6:33** – You should be willing to place your complete trust in the one who is able to provide anything you need. You are a seeker of God and his kingdom first.
- **Matthew 11:12** – You will be the kind of person who is actively pursuing God, in fact Matthew uses the word “forcefully”. You're not on the defensive but rather you're on the offensive, forcefully going after the kingdom.

Jesus calls this “Good News”!

- Some of this seems negative so how is this good news?

Wouldn't good news be the "rock" coming to defeat the kingdoms of the world and bring in the kingdom of God! Then we wouldn't have to worry about anything because we would have everything we need and can sit around on clouds singing praises to God for eternity?

It's good news because God loves you so much, he wants you to grow and mature, learning to trust him in the process. It's good news because through the suffering of his son Jesus you can have a relationship with the King of the Kingdom, and you won't be condemned for your sin like the rest of the world.

That truly is "Good News"!

Matthew outlines three things that Jesus taught in the beginning that are necessary for those who are part of the Kingdom of God.

1. **Repentance (5:3):** *Understanding our personal bankruptcy, admitting it to God and turning from it.* We have nothing to offer for our salvation except the sin that makes it necessary. I have nothing of value – no possessions, no good works, nothing that could pay for me to be part of the kingdom.
2. **Communication (6:9-13):** Prayer. I acknowledge to the Father his right to be King of the Kingdom. I express my desire for his kingdom and his will to be what rules and directs my life.
3. **Pursuit (7:7-8):** I Ask, Seek, and Knock, I go after God.
 - a. I am persistent and sincere in my pursuit, in my seeking of the righteousness of the King.

None of this is easy. We are living in the territory of the other kingdom and are constantly being bombarded with the lies of that kingdom.

But Jesus tells us that if you are willing to repent of your rebellion against God, communicate with Him, acknowledging that he has the right to be King, and pursue His righteousness you have nothing to worry about because you are part of the only Kingdom that matters. And this King will provide everything you need because He loves and cares about you.

Grasp the Good News of the Kingdom of God and hold on to it!