

Matthew 21-01-07b

As we continue our study now, I'm going to pick up the pace a bit because we've clarified that in the beginning of Jesus' ministry, starting with John the Baptist's introduction and extending to and through Jesus traveling the land, preaching the kingdom in synagogues, sending his disciples out to present that kingdom, there comes a change. And by the time we get to Matthew 21, what we're going to see is Jesus make a new announcement. You can turn to Matthew 21 right quick.

I'm skipping very many references to the kingdom, but we're going to see a similar statement when we get to the book of Acts. Verse 43, after telling the story of the vineyard and the wicked vinedressers, Jesus says, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. This was the exhortation and the preaching of John the Baptist bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down. Chapter three, verse 10. If there's no fruit, the tree is going to be burned.

If it's chaff and not wheat, it's destined for fire. In chapter seven, verse 19, the tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and burned. So the kingdom is going to be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

Just before that, he says, if you never read the scripture, the stone, which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. In the day when the kingdom ought to be getting built, the builders, i.e. the religious leadership have rejected the very cornerstone that would make that building have its purpose and be completed. The stone rejected by the builders is going to end up being the cornerstone.

That's the millennial kingdom. What is the nation that bears the fruits of it? It's going to be taken from you who are not bearing fruit, are not repenting, are not changing your mind. Those who receive him not, they weren't looking to the Father to begin with.

They're not of the class of Simeon and Anna or Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea or Jesus' disciples or Mary and Martha and Lazarus or a host of others. They're not like Zacchaeus. They've got a different heart.

They're not looking to God. And so it isn't given to them in the same way that the truth is not given to them in plain terms, but in parables, the ability to see and respond to Jesus is not given to them because it's wasted on them. Seeing they see and do not perceive, hearing they hear and do not understand.

So the kingdom is taken from them and given not to the nations, but to a nation bearing the fruits of it. What is that nation? Resurrected Old Testament Israel. When they pass under the rod, those who are allowed in, the meek who inherit the earth, those who are

persecuted for righteousness sake and possess the kingdom, theirs is the kingdom.

That's the nation producing the fruit. Humility, faith and obedience under pressure. Those are the ones who are going to populate the kingdom, not that generation.

Jesus says this generation, you're a brood of vipers, but there is a nation that is going to inherit the kingdom and that is the millennial kingdom. So we naturally ask ourselves the question. You remember my final question on Sunday, very last couple of verses in Acts.

What is Paul doing for two years in Rome under house arrest? He's preaching the kingdom and this is after Pentecost. He's the apostle to the Gentiles. He's preaching the kingdom.

So I hope by now the question has arisen like a giant pillar of cloud in your mind. Well, what does the kingdom mean to me? Because I am not Israel and I'm not Old Testament and I'm not going to be raised at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. I'm going to be raised seven years prior to that at the rapture.

So what does the kingdom mean to me? And you can't appeal to this verse in Matthew 21 because the kingdom that is taken from those who were unworthy of it is not given to us. It's given to a nation bearing its fruit, the fruit that Israel was called to bear. It's the fruit of faith and obedience that John and Jesus and the disciples all spoke of.

You notice there in verse 45 of Matthew 21, the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables and perceived that he was speaking of them. When they tried to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes because the multitudes took him for a prophet and rightly so. So let's complete our survey of what the kingdom is and isn't and we're going to see what the kingdom is for us.

In the book of Acts and you can turn to Acts chapter eight, you can stop at chapter one on the way, but we're not going to spend much time there because in the first chapter, the disciples asked the resurrected Jesus Christ about the kingdom being assembled in verse four of Acts chapter one, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the father, which you have heard from me, John baptized with water, you shall be baptized with the Holy spirit, not many days from now. That of course is going to happen in the next chapter. Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? So all of the kingdom parables and the disciples to whom it had been given to understand those parables to whom Jesus explained the parables, what did they think the kingdom was? Who did they think was getting the kingdom? Israel.

There's any doubt in your military mind. Look at Acts chapter one, verse six, these disciples who heard all of the kingdom parables had all of them explained said, so are you restoring that kingdom to Israel at this time? Jesus said, it's not for you to know the

time. It's going to be a long time.

As a matter of fact, the times and seasons have been established by God. They've been put in place by God's own authority. You are going to receive power.

And he's back to talking about what he talked about up in verse five, the promise of the father, the Holy spirit. When the Holy spirit comes, you're going to have power and you will be to me both in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria until the end of the age, not to the ends of the earth until the end of the age, Jesus disciples listening to him in Acts chapter one, just prior to the Ascension are apostles to the Jews. Peter's going to have some exposure to Gentiles.

He's going to open the door. He's going to convince James and the Jerusalem council that God wants to include the Gentiles in his plan and purpose. But these men are not the apostles to the uttermost parts of the earth.

These men, it takes 11 guys to minister the gospel of the kingdom to Israel. It just takes one to minister it to all the rest of the Gentile world. So now go on to Acts chapter eight.

And one of the few times that you have the kingdom mentioned in Acts, it's only mentioned a handful of times, but in Acts chapter eight, Saul is persecuting the church, wreaking havoc. And you've got Simon, the sorcerer in verse nine, astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming he's someone great. People are listening to him.

This man is the great power of God. What did Jesus get through saying to his disciples? You're going to have power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Simon is claiming to be someone great.

Everyone's giving heed. He's got the great power of God. Everyone says they heeded him because he astonished them with trickery, with sorceries for a long time.

But when they believed Philip, as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, men and women were baptized. Simon believed when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and was amazed seeing the miracles and signs which were done because they were the real thing, not sorceries and trickeries. But Philip, they sometimes call him Philip the evangelist, preached the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Who is Philip preaching to? Who is he preaching about? What did Jesus say in Acts chapter one? You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. So explaining what's up with the kingdom to the Jews and the Samaritans is still within that purview, within that commission, right? Now go to Acts chapter 14. We're aiming for verse 22.

Paul is at Lystra and Derbe and they stoned Paul in verse 19. This is Acts 14, 19. They

stoned Paul, dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

Now Lystra and Derbe, are we in Israel or are we not? We're not. We're up at Iconium, past Antioch. This is to the Gentiles.

You can look at chapter 13, verse 47, I've set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth. That's what the Lord has commanded. So he's preaching in Lystra and Derbe.

He's stoned and dragged out for dead, but the disciples gather around him. He rose up and went into the city and then he goes with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying, we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.

We must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God. Does it require passing through tribulation to enter into salvation? No, the kingdom of God is not a synonym for salvation. You could say, well, we've got to be persecuted a lot before we enter into the fullness of our salvation, before we're raised and taken to heaven or whatever, but that's a stretch.

Entering the kingdom of God is something that is done by faith and obedience. It is humility. It is persevering in faith and obedience under persecution.

Jesus said this in the Sermon on the Mount. Turn a few pages to Acts 19. We're looking for verse 8. Paul is at Ephesus.

He runs into these disciples of John. We don't know anything about the Holy Spirit. We've only been baptized into John's baptism.

Paul says, John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is on Christ Jesus, Messiah Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them.

They spoke with tongues and prophesied. There were about 12 men. And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

You see the shift now? Paul is now preaching to Gentiles in the age of the Holy Spirit, the things concerning the kingdom of God. This is not the millennial kingdom. The millennial kingdom is not promised to church age Gentiles.

What is the millennial kingdom a picture of? Think back to the Exodus. What is the

Passover a picture of? Salvation under the blood of the Passover lamb. Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Passing through the sea, baptism as it were, and then persevering in the wilderness until they, Caleb and Joshua only, and the second generation, which is sort of a regeneration, generation, are able to enter into the land of promise. The land of promise, the land of Canaan, is a picture of the millennial kingdom. It's a foreshadowing.

It's a birth pang. It's a land flowing with milk and honey, but it's not the peaceable kingdom. It's ruled initially by Joshua and then by the judges.

The prophet Samuel is in that mix. And it's several hundred years before you have the throne of David, but that doesn't last. There is a kingdom that has duration, the millennial kingdom.

So it is a picture. The millennial kingdom itself is a picture. Hypothetically speaking, if the kingdom had come in when Jesus offered it, let's say there'd been a generation of wonderful Simeons and Annas and Nicodemuses and Peter, Andrew, James, and Johnses and all the rest of them.

And it all said, even so come Lord Jesus, you are the Messiah. The triumphal entry would have ended. Jesus would have gone to the temple, would have become the king, would have accomplished redemption and atonement in some other way.

And the millennial kingdom would have begun. What do you think would have happened regarding the Gentiles at that point? In the same way that Old Testament Israel was itself a picture of the gospel, when God calls his people to change of mind and faithfulness and obedience, and when they do that, they will live, do these and you will live, break these commandments, be disobedient, apathetic, and faithless, and you will die. Their physical life and physical death, their physical prosperity and physical judgment were a picture to the nations.

They were a light to the Gentiles. They were a walking parable for all nations that if you come to God, he honors faith and obedience and he judges rebellion, rejection, and faithlessness. That was the gospel.

Israel was tasked with sending no missionaries. They produced no tracts. They were a walking tract.

They were an advertisement that there was a God in heaven, the God of Israel, and that approaching him in faith with change of mind, Hebrews 11.6, the one who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. You come to God. Well, Israel is a picture for the Gentiles.

Israel's millennial kingdom, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven that has been

spoken of all through Matthew and through the first half of Acts is a picture of the ultimate kingdom that we are aiming for. Jesus said, you know, my kingdom, when he's talking to Pilate, is not of this world. If the world was my kingdom, my servants would agonize of mine.

My servants would fight. Same word that's used, you know, strive to enter by the narrow gates. Broad is the way, wide is the gate that leads to destruction.

Narrow is the way, straight is the gate that leads to life. Strive to enter into life, agonize to enter, fight to enter. You don't agonize and fight.

You don't strive to be saved, but you do have to work, show your faith by your work to be approved unto God, a workman, not ashamed. A workman, not a helpless victim carried on a stretcher, a workman, not ashamed, trusting in God's word. So there is the work of faith.

God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and your labor of love after salvation, living faith, walking by faith, looking forward to the kingdom in faith and by faith. That is our hope. Hope is the motivation for our love.

Faith is the means by which we enter into that realm of privilege. So this is the kingdom for us. The millennial kingdom is a literal earthly kingdom.

It is a literal earthly picture of the coming kingdom of the father. And it is going to demonstrate that the kingdom of the father cannot be of the old earth. That's why that kingdom is going to end with the Gog Magog rebellion.

It is going to end with Satan released from the bottomless pit by God himself to show that those who exercise their free will to disobey and to depart from God cannot be allowed to remain. Doesn't matter how long you keep them on ice. As soon as they're loose, it metastasizes.

It's cancerous. So now that we know that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, that Jesus is telling these parables about is first and foremost, as it is presented to Israel, the millennial kingdom. But when we observe it, and when we interpret and apply for ourselves, we don't think of and anticipate the millennial kingdom.

We think of and anticipate the kingdom of the father, and we are preparing ourselves for opportunity and function in that spiritual kingdom of which the millennial literal earthly kingdom, the thousand year kingdom under the throne of David is a picture. Clear? Now, quickly look at Matthew chapter 13. The seed parables are going to fall in place now like you can't believe.

The kingdom parables are going to fall in place. So the parable of the sower explained, Matthew 13, 18 and following. Hear the parable of the sower.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. No problem here because this is not failure to understand the gospel of salvation. This is failure to understand the opportunity that the imminent kingdom at hand represents.

You don't understand it. Why? It isn't given to you to understand because you have not already been listening to the father. You've not already been looking to the father.

There were plenty of people who were and who did. The shepherds, the Christmas story people, the wise men from the east for crying out loud. They see a star in the sky.

They're ready to come and worship the king of Israel. They know who he is. Got that information hundreds of years earlier from Daniel himself.

There are people who are looking, seeking, ready to receive. To him who has that, more will be given. Jesus just got through saying in this passage.

So if you do not understand the word of the kingdom, this is for believers who are apathetic toward the opportunity that hope should be motivating them to pursue, that faith should be the means of obtaining, that love should be the motivating and driving commandment, defining kingdom people. It is the law of love. It is a kingdom defined by love, love for God and love for one another.

If you don't understand that word, you can be a believer and not understand the word of the kingdom. You misunderstand it. You can be thinking kingdom now.

You can think if we build it, he will come. You can think, well, I'm going to inherit the millennial kingdom. It's replacement theology.

Israel is set aside. We're now God's church. We're the Israel of God and so on.

Misunderstanding because you don't have that Proverbs 2 heart. You don't have that Psalm 1 heart. Delighting in the law of the Lord and reflecting and meditating in it day and night.

Being the tree planted by the rivers of water. That tree is going to bring forth fruit in its season. Why does it bring forth fruit? John said, bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

Jesus said, tree that doesn't bear good fruit is going to be cut down. How can you be the tree that bears good fruit? Make sure you are planted by the river of living water. Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly.

Don't stand in the way of sinners. Don't sit in the seat of the scornful. And by the way, don't expose your soul to too much television, too much internet in this day, because that is the ungodly, the sinners, and the scornful talking 24 seven.

Don't stand in that way. Don't sit in that seat. Don't walk in that council.

You can be aware we can be in the world, but not of it. So that's why they don't understand. They should understand.

There's no excuse for not understanding. If they had been looking to God, Hebrews 11 six, believing that he is and that he'll reward those who seek him, they would understand it. Jesus said, you disciples, it's given to you to understand why you were at the Jordan.

When John was baptizing before I ever showed up, you were waiting, you were watching, you were looking. And when it was identified for you, you heard the voice of the shepherd. You recognized it.

And you followed, you followed Jesus to where he stayed on the day of the, of the baptism. You followed him to Cana of Galilee. You heard his voice and you followed when he called you up the mountain, you came.

Why? You were already looking. What may be known of God is manifest to everyone. Romans chapter one, those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness have got problems.

Verse 20, he received the seat on stony places. This is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. Oh, great.

The kingdom is coming, but he has no root in himself, endures only for a while. Tribulation or persecution arises. Who is it that is going to inherit the kingdom? Who is it that theirs is the kingdom of God.

Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, these people, tribulation, persecution arises. They stumble. They don't persist.

They don't pursue. They don't stick. They don't stay.

You don't have to persist and stay for salvation, but you do if you want inheritance in the kingdom. He receives seed verse 22, among the thorns. He hears the word of the kingdom.

Here's an opportunity for future, for future blessing and service and reflecting the glory of God. But the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he's unfruitful, not bearing fruit, distracted too much in the world. The cares of this world.

If you turn on your TV, if you look at the feed on your internet, you're going to get soaked in the cares of the world. A little of that goes a long way. This is my advice.

This is Sam, not scripture sort of, but notice the cares of this world can choke the word,

distract us. We need to be thinking Bible. We need to be thinking body of Christ.

Christ on this earth. What would he be saying and doing? Would he be sitting in front of the tube, sweating bullets? Would he spend all of his time talking current events? I have come to do the will of my father. I must be about my father's business.

Not my will, but thine be done. He received the seed verse 23 on good ground is he who hears the word and understands it just the opposite of the first hard packed ground. He hears it and gets it.

I see this. I know what the mission is and I bear fruit 30 fold, 60 fold, a hundred fold. Now the parable of the sower of the seed makes sense because you don't have to say, I can't believe that somebody would have been saved if the seed had laid there long enough, but the devil came and snatched it away.

And that's why they're not saved. Jesus is later going to tell these Pharisees, um, that they are preventing people from entering the kingdom says you don't enter yourself and you don't let other people enter either. Do you seriously believe that people can keep other people from being saved? That guy distracted me.

That guy gave me a fake gospel. I was trying to be saved. He says, you, you prevent those who are entering selling this to the scribes and Pharisees.

And he says, you won't enter. You refuse to enter and you're obstructing others who are entering. That cannot be true of salvation.

It is true of living faith. If you let yourself be led into programs and into, uh, human standards of accomplishment, you can miss the kingdom. People can lead other people astray when it comes to living faith and what it is to be a believer.

And it's back to the Bible. It's back to what scripture says to keep us straight. Well, now when you come to the parable of the wheat and tares and you see the kingdom of heaven, like a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

When the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. The seed is sowed and it takes time to grow and not until it's grown. And at the point where it should be bearing fruit are the tares apparent in the early days, you couldn't tell the difference, but toward the end, as you're getting closer to harvest, it becomes apparent that some of this stuff is fruitful and some is not.

So the servants of the owner came and said, sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? An enemy has done this. Servants say, do you want us then to go gather them up? He says, no, lest while you gather up the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them. Now, can you be uprooted from salvation? Can you be

plucked out of God's hand? Can you be plucked out of Christ's hand? Gospel of John, Jesus says, no, no man can pluck them out of my father's hand.

No man can pluck them out of my hand. You cannot be uprooted. So what does it mean to be uprooted? If these tears are removed too soon, let both grow together until the harvest.

This is the kingdom of heaven. Has the kingdom come yet? When Jesus tells these parables, has it come? It has not come. Jesus is going to tell Pilate right before he's crucified.

My kingdom is not of this world. So the kingdom has not come. So how can there be tears amongst the wheat as Jesus is speaking? Does this kingdom pertain to the church age? And there are false professors sitting in the pews of the church.

Well, we don't want to remove the atheistic, unbeliever, pagan guys that are sitting in your midst, pretending to be Christians because that might uproot some of the good Christians in the church. How does that work? How so? It makes no sense. What does make sense is that the millennial kingdom is going to start with good seed.

The kingdom has been taken from these people and given to a nation who will produce its fruit. And they're going to have 10 centuries to grow and mature and produce that fruit and be ready for the sheep and goats judgment. What did you do when I was naked, when I was sick, when I was in prison? Did you clothe me? Did you feed me? Did you visit me? If you've done it to the least of these, my brethren, law of love, law of the kingdom, you have done it to me.

Not a faith basis, a works basis, because this is what it takes to be judged in the kingdom. Tears, wait until the harvest, let them both grow together. And at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers first, gather together the tears and bind them in bundles to burn them.

This is the end of the millennial kingdom. This is the Gog Magog rebellion. This is when God's angels are going to fight Satan and his angels and all of the tears that have been growing for 10 centuries in Jesus kingdom.

Unbelievers will not be weeded out of the kingdom. The moment they appear, they will be left in the kingdom until the end, until Gog Magog, then they will be gathered in bundles and burned. This is the great white throne judgment that we gathered into the barn.

The barn represents the future kingdom of the father. So understanding what the kingdom is and what it isn't gives us that understanding that Jesus claimed for his disciples, his followers, to you, it is given to understand. It takes a foundation in the scriptures to make sense out of this and to not mess it up.

You have that because you have been faithfully, all of you have been faithfully attending Bible class for many years and it is given to us to understand. It's clear, you know, what does and does not comport with grace at salvation. And you know, what does and does not comport with what our calling is as believers to faith and obedience and to have works from our faith.

Salvation is not of works lest any man should boast, but entering the kingdom, being judged greater in the kingdom or less in the kingdom is based on works. What you do, every man will be judged according to his works. Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.

How did you build? Not what did God sovereignly pour into your soul? Let every man be careful how he builds, building his work, laying a straight course of bricks in the word of truth. That's work. We do that.

Blessing and reward opportunity for function, reflecting the glory of God, service, proximity, fellowship, dwelling in the new Jerusalem is based on what you and I do, not who and what we are positionally in Christ. Many people positionally are going to be outside the kingdom of the father, just as many who were positionally Israel and the people of God will be outside the millennial kingdom. It's a picture.

Observe, interpret, apply. Well, we have much more to say now that we've got these notions of the kingdom well in hand. We know it is and isn't pertinent.

We're going to be able to sail through the kingdom parables and make fruitful application for ourselves as we move forward. But we'll close here for tonight in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for your Holy Spirit, which is the seal of our salvation, seals us unto the day of redemption, seals us unto the day of Christ.

We thank you for the power of your word and how that truth enables us and sustains us and is manna for our souls. We thank you for the Lord Jesus, who is our example, who did not live by physical things alone, but by every word that proceeds from your mouth. We pray that as we reflect on these truths and look at our circumstances and the challenges that we are inevitably going to face in the coming year, that the things we have gleaned from your word will be useful, will renew and restore and refresh our souls and give us confidence that in the day of Christ, having armed ourselves with everything that you've provided, we will have done all and be able to stand.

We thank you and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.