

demonstrate Jesus' authority over disease, nature, sin, and even death. Everyone needed to see what the blind could see: Jesus was the Son of David, God's appointed king. The miracles are also not merely academic—something to cause wonder but leave the witness unmoved. Rather they require a response—full submission to the one who does the works of God. As Jesus did miracles, he made demands: trust me fully (like the centurion), follow me at all costs, and tell others the good news of the kingdom.

JESUS SENDS OUT APOSTLES (MATT 10)

With opposition rising, Jesus knew that his time to get the word out was limited. Thus he chose to multiply his efforts by sending six pairs of apostles throughout the cities of Israel to announce that the kingdom of God was near. The instructions he gave are pertinent to this particular situation and not normative for all time: the urgency ("take no bag") was because of the opposition, the restriction from Gentiles was because the Messiah was first for Israel, and the miracles attested to Jesus' identity.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (MATT 11)

When John questions whether Jesus is the Messiah or not, Jesus' answer is crystal clear to the one who knows the OT prophecies: by healing the sick, raising the dead, and preaching to the poor, Jesus demonstrated that he is the one. Jesus then explained the role of John the Baptist as the fulfillment of the predicted forerunner. Yet in lamenting the peoples' response to John and himself, Jesus knew that rejection that was coming.

GOING FURTHER

How do these passages mean more when read in the context of Jesus' ministry? What are some wrong interpretations?

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STUDY

Read Matt 12–20. Think carefully about Israel's rejection of Jesus. How did Jesus respond? What changes resulted in his ministry and teaching?

TEACHING AND MIRACLES OF THE KINGDOM (MATT 5-11)

PREPARATION FOR THIS STUDY

Read Matt 5-11. What does the writer want you to understand about Jesus? What is the significance of Jesus' miracles? What is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mt? How does the OT help us to understand these chapters?

BACKGROUND

In Matt 1–4, Jesus was introduced as the long-awaited king who would rule on the throne of David in fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. As Jesus traveled around Galilee, he preached the "good news of the kingdom": repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom *from* heaven—it is God's kingdom established on earth. Daniel saw God's kingdom come as a rock to smash the statue of man's kingdoms (Dan 2). Zechariah described the day when the Lord would descend to the Mount of Olives, defeat Jerusalem's enemies, and "the Lord will be king over the whole earth" (Zech 14). Jesus came as the Anointed One to establish God's kingdom on earth. The kingdom was near because Jesus was here.

SUMMARY

Jesus presented himself as the Messiah to the nation of Israel in two primary ways: teaching and miracles. The teaching explained the requirements to enter the kingdom. The miracles proved his identity as one sent by God (John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb 2:3-4).

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (MATT 5-7)

The Beatitudes (5:1-12): The eight beatitudes do not describe eight different kinds of people (poor in spirit, mournful, meek, etc.) and eight different kinds of rewards (kingdom of heaven, comfort, inherit the earth, etc.). Rather they describe the qualities of one person who will receive one reward—entrance into God's kingdom. Those who receive the kingdom of heaven are those who inherit the earth, are comforted, will see God, and will be called sons of God. These people are indeed blessed, though until the kingdom comes they may face great persecution, just as the prophets did.

Salt and Light (5:13-16): God chose Israel and placed them in the center of the world to be a kingdom of priests and a light to the nations. They were in danger of failing their commission.

The Heart of the Sermon (5:17-20): Jesus' message was not a discarding of the Mosaic Law, for he taught obedience to it in the truest way, adhering to its spirit and not merely its letter. Here Jesus made the entrance requirement to the kingdom crystal clear: they must be more righteous than the Pharisees or they would not enter. As the perfectly righteous one, Jesus would fulfill the Mosaic Law, meeting its demands in full and accomplishing what the Law looked forward to. (In this way the Law would be "filled up" in Jesus so that those who are "in Christ" have fulfilled the demands of the Law and are thus worthy to enter the kingdom.)

Two Kinds of Righteousness (5:21-6:18): This section is an expansion of 5:20, for Jesus' claim that the righteousness of the Pharisees was not good enough for the kingdom must have been shocking. So Jesus contrasts their brand of righteousness with God's demands. They said that one was only guilty of murder if he killed a person. Jesus explained that the sixth commandment was broken if someone murdered another in their thoughts. The Pharisees said that divorce was acceptable if a certificate was given, but Jesus explained that divorce results in adultery. Jesus repudiates the Pharisaic version of the Mosaic Law, making it clear that what God truly demanded in the Mosaic Law was much more difficult to fulfill. Who can enter the kingdom of God? Those who are like God.

Waiting for the Kingdom (6:19-7:12): How is one to live while waiting for God to establish his kingdom on earth? Jesus teaches us to resist idols and to seek God's kingdom first, trusting God to provide. He warns against hypocritical judging and calls them to trust their heavenly Father. He sums it all up: love your neighbor as yourself.

Conclusion: An Invitation (7:13-29): Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount by making it clear that the people have a choice. They can

either follow the Pharisees down the broad road to destruction or they can follow Jesus on the narrow path into the kingdom. The real proof of one's life is not what one claims with his mouth but what one produces in his life. Those who are wise will take Jesus' words to heart and build their lives upon them. Those who ignore Jesus' call to righteousness will be destroyed like the house built on the sand.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS (MATT 8-9)

Anyone can make the bold claims that Jesus did, but he backed up his words with divine works that attested to his identity. As the Messiah sent by God, Jesus could do the works of God. By doing miracles characteristic of the kingdom, he was providing his credentials as the prophesied king.

1. He made the lame to walk, a characteristic of the kingdom when "the lame will leap like a deer" (Matt 8:6; Isa 35:6).
2. He healed the sick, just as Isaiah predicted of the Servant, "He carried our diseases" (Matt 8:14-17; Isa 53:4).
3. He gave sight to the blind, just as was predicted of the kingdom: "The eyes of the blind will be opened" (Matt 9:30; Isa 35:5).
4. He raised the dead, a foretaste of the kingdom when "he will swallow up death forever" (Matt 9:25; Isa 25:8).
5. In performing miracles, he demonstrated his knowledge of and submission to God's Word, qualifying himself as Israel's faithful king (Matt 8:4; Deut 17:19).
6. In casting out demons, Jesus showed himself as the one who would crush the serpent and his seed (Matt 8:32; Gen 3:15).
7. In declaring sins to be forgiven, he was making a bold statement that he had authority to forgive sins, a prerogative that all knew belonged to God alone (Matt 9:6).

These miracles are not primarily to show Jesus' compassion for his people, for if this was true he would heal all. They were intended to