

KINGDOM CONSISTENCY

There is consistency all the way through the OT concerning the coming Messianic/Davidic throne and kingdom. Consistently, it refers to a coming, earthly kingdom in relation to Israel in particular, but then extending to the ends of the earth. It is this very same kingdom concept that the prophets foretold. The prophets prophesied of it and Gabriel then told Mary that it would be fulfilled in Jesus.

It is this very same kingdom that John the Baptist had in view when he said:

Matthew 3:2 (NKJV)

2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

The “*kingdom of heaven*” is synonymous with “*the kingdom of God*” in the other gospels. Matthew’s audience was Jewish, and they did not like to use the Name God for fear they would use it in vain. Therefore, they commonly used the word “*heaven*” instead of the Name “*God*”.

The condition for Israel to enter into the kingdom was to REPENT and thus, be prepared to receive the Messiah and thereby enter into the kingdom. When the Messiah came, He legitimately offered Israel the kingdom on the condition of repentance.

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

In view was the very same kingdom the OT prophets, Gabriel, and John the Baptist had referenced. Jesus was not offering some kind of a “*spiritual kingdom*”, but rather the promised Messianic/Davidic earthly kingdom foretold in the OT Scriptures.

When Jesus sent His disciples out He said:

Matthew 10:5–8 (NKJV)

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Again, there is complete consistency with the Messianic Kingdom prophesied in the OT (cf. Isa. 35:5-6). The apostles were an extension of Christ's kingdom ministry at this point. Their miracles were evidence that the kingdom was indeed being offered to Israel on the condition of repentance.

In the Scriptures, miracles do not happen in a vacuum. The NT often refers to them as ***“signs and wonders”***. A proper understanding of miracles is closely associated with the KINGDOM theme in Scripture.

Clusters of miracles in the Bible consistently occur at strategic times including when the ***“kingdom of God”*** truth is being presented.

Note that in the early ministry of Christ, He was proclaiming the ***“kingdom is at hand”*** with evidence of kingdom miracles involving “signs and wonders” (cf. Isa. 35:5-6). But, when the leaders of the nation firmly rejected Christ and blasphemed the Spirit, as seen in Matthew 12, things changed. From then on, Christ no longer spoke of the kingdom as being at hand.

Instead, from that point on, Jesus began to speak to them in judicial judgment, as found in parables (as seen in Matthew 13).

Matthew 13:10–11 (NKJV)

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know **the mysteries of the kingdom** of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

The OT prophets saw both the reality of suffering as well as a reigning Messiah. However, they could not make sense as to how both of these realities could relate to one person (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-11). The disciples were looking for the kingdom to be set up immediately, as it had been offered. However, after the rejection by the nation, as seen in the blasphemy of the Spirit (cf. Matt. 12), Jesus then revealed further information about the coming kingdom (especially regarding its delay) that was hidden from the rejecting nation.

Jesus, in the parables, revealed that because of Israel's rejection of her Messiah, there would now be a GAP between His first coming to offer the kingdom and His second coming to establish the kingdom.

After this, Christ said in Matt. 16:4 that ***“A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”***

The miracles of Christ and His apostles were given as evidence that the kingdom was being presented on the condition of repentance. Once the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn, the miracles subsided.

Hebrews 6:5 (NKJV)

5 and have tasted the good word of God and the **powers of the age to come,**

The early Church sampled the powers of the kingdom age to come. Properly speaking, these miracles belonged to the classification of ***“kingdom miracles”*** related to the kingdom “age to come”.

After the resurrection of Christ, Peter again made clear what was necessary for the kingdom to come, namely, the condition of Israel’s repentance. After Peter healed a lame man in the early days of the Church, the whole of Jerusalem was stirred and Peter said:

Acts 3:19–21 (NKJV)

19 **Repent therefore and be converted,** that your sins may be blotted out, so that **times of refreshing may come** from the presence of the Lord, **20** and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, **21** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

The ***“times of refreshing”*** refers to the coming of the Messiah, when He comes to usher in the kingdom and bring restoration to Israel. Again, this was conditioned upon repentance on the part of Israel.

After the early days of the Church Age, miracles subsided. The kingdom is not being presented as being “at hand” during this, the Church Age. Miracles, properly understood, are very closely tied to the presentation of kingdom truth. Sign-miracles are no longer taking place because the kingdom is not immediately being presented.

When miracles will come back on the scene is during the Tribulation Period with the ministry of the two special witnesses, as found in Rev. 11. One of them will evidently be Elijah (cf. Mal. 4:5), and many think the other may well be Moses, since they do Elijah- and Moses-like miracles.

And the point is, at that time they will again be preaching the ***“gospel of the coming kingdom”***, which will then be on the horizon.

Early in Jesus’ ministry, He came preaching the ***“gospel of the kingdom”***, emphasizing the kingdom was at hand. In those days, He did not essentially talk about the cross. However, when Israel rejected Him, He ceased to talk about the kingdom as being at hand and began to share with His disciples how He was to suffer and die.

Today, we are not preaching ***“the kingdom is at hand”*** because it has been delayed. So, we are not preaching “the gospel of the kingdom” in that sense. Instead, we are preaching “the gospel of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection” (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4). However, in the Tribulation Period, they will again proclaim the gospel of the kingdom.

Matthew 24:14 (NKJV)

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He said they were to pray for the kingdom to come. This is the ultimate goal!

Matthew 6:10 (NKJV)

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom was not yet present; rather, they were to pray for it to come, and when it does come, it will be characterized by God’s will being done on earth as it is in heaven. Believe me, that has yet to happen. We are still waiting for the Messianic Kingdom to come and we are still praying for it.

Indeed, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”