

MORE THAN ABUNDANT PROOF!

The Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan. As a matter of refuting the depraved insanity of the Pharisees' charge, Matthew presents a summary of Christ's exceedingly GOOD, BENEVOLENT, and EXTENSIVE ministry in Matthew 9:35.

Matthew 9:35 (NKJV)

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities [walled towns] and villages [unwalled communities], teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

The gospels record three Galilean tours in Jesus' earthly ministry (cf. Mt. 4:18-20; Matt. 8-11; Matt. 14). Matthew tends to write with a thematic purpose in view. It seems that Matthew 4:23 and Matthew 9:35 are "**bookends**," saying essentially the same thing as an overview.

Matthew 4:23 (NKJV)

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 9:35 (NKJV)

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Sandwiched right in the middle of these two "bookends" is the "Sermon on the Mount" in chapters 5-7, which contains a collection of Christ's kingdom ethics, which is then followed by a collection of stories related to Christ's authority to heal, etc. So, what we have is a 5-chapter unit (chps 5-9) which first highlights Christ's kingdom teaching and then gives typical examples of Christ's healing ministry, all of which serve to demonstrate that Jesus was the King presenting the truth and power of the kingdom.

Bookend: Matt. 4:23 – teaching – preaching – healing

Matt. 5-7 – Kingdom ethics

Matt. 8-9- Kingdom authority on display

Bookend: Matt. 9:35 – teaching – preaching - healing

Thus, Matthew thematically in “block” fashion presents examples of Christ’s kingdom teaching ministry and His kingdom power, showing clearly that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah Who has kingdom authority.

The word ***gospel*** means “***good news***”. Jesus came preaching the good news of the kingdom. He presented the same Messianic kingdom prophesied in the OT. He was the KING presenting the kingdom on the condition of repentance. He was the KING presenting samples of kingdom restoration in His healing ministry, which provided evidence that indeed He was the prophesied Messiah/King on the scene.

Alas, the leadership of Israel rejected this “***gospel of the kingdom***” put forth by Christ, and the kingdom was put on hold, but the presentation of it was real.

And the ministry of Jesus was extensive – not merely a hit-and-miss claim here and there. It was so HUGE and convincing that even the Pharisees could not deny it. The Jewish historian Josephus said that in Galilee there were 200 cities that had at least 15,000 people living in them. If that assessment is true, it would mean that Galilee had a population of more than **3 million people** and that Jesus had an extensive ministry that touched a huge portion of this population. Jesus’ Galilean ministry was wide, broad, and undeniable!

How ludicrous to think this was the work of Satan with all the GOOD that Jesus did far and wide. That whole view is insanely wicked!

And in contrast to Satan, Jesus actually cared about people! Satan comes to harm, kill, and destroy (cf. Jn. 10:10). Jesus came bringing healing and kingdom restoration. And Christ’s ministry was in stark contrast to the religious leaders who did nothing but oppress the people with their hypocritical legalism (cf. Mt. 23:4; Lk. 11:46).