

KINGDOM SIGN-GIFTS

In Matthew 10, we note this combination: The power to do kingdom miracles and the announcement “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” After telling them what to preach (the kingdom announcement), Jesus then said:

Matthew 10:8 (NKJV)

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

Note the “kingdom emphasis” on healing and deliverance. With preaching the kingdom of heaven came these kingdom sign miracles. Sandwiched in between the authority to do “kingdom sign” miracles and the command to do them was the command to preach the kingdom as being at hand (v. 7). Kingdom miracles and kingdom preaching went together.

Matthew 10:1 (NKJV)

1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, **He gave them power** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Matthew 10:7 (NKJV)

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

Matthew 10:8 (NKJV)

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

And note that with the exercise of “kingdom miracles” there was to be NO CHARGE. They were not to use this newfound power to make a profit. Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give.” This had a kingdom purpose only – not a personal profit purpose.

And right here was Judas’ problem. He liked the “power”, but he also wanted to profit from the ministry.

One commentator writes: *“It is likely that vv. 8-15 have been responsible for more fanaticism than any comparable passage of Scripture.”* Many Charismatic Christians think that just like the apostles, they have been commissioned to do these sorts of miracles. They are wrong. They are not rightly dividing the Word.

This is purely a KINGDOM presentation emphasis in the context of Christ's earthly ministry. It is purely an apostolic context. It is purely a Messianic context in relationship to an Israeli context.

“Matthew 10 speaks of a special commission, for a special embassy, to a special people, at a special time, in a special place, and for a special purpose. Miracles were the credentials of the King's ambassadors on the dawn of what could have been the kingdom age.” – **John Phillips**

And in contrast to the emphasis we have in Matthew 10, it is interesting how many supposed “**faith healers**” use their ministry as a money-making scheme. They don't do it for “**free**”. They are not practicing, “**Freely you have received, freely give.**” It has also been pointed out that while “faith healers” claim the power of verse 8, they do not make application of verse 9, which says, “**Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts**”. They are very selective in their application of Scripture – which is a tendency of false teachers.

Costi W. Hinn (the nephew of famous Benny Hinn) has written a book titled: “GOD, GREED, AND THE (PROSPERITY) GOSPEL. And in it he writes:

“Whenever possible, Benny would preach to the masses that if they wanted a miracle for their sickness and disease, they needed to give money to God [which of course just happened to be the Benny Hinn ministry – convenient how that works]. No money? No miracle! Giving to God was the secret to unlocking your dreams. ...

Christian leaders are expected to be free from the love of money (1 Tim. 3:3), not obsessing over how to raid the offering buckets. Christian leaders are expected to care for people as loving, humble shepherds (1 Pet. 5:2), not act as manipulative salesmen. Finally, Christian leaders are expected to use their God-given authority to protect people from deception and boldly steer the church into the truth (Heb. 13:7), not exploit and control desperate people.” – p. 46 and 177

True and faithful ministers of God's Word do not make merchandise of their ministry. They do not market the ministry!

2 Corinthians 2:17 (NKJV)

17 For we are not, as so many, peddling [merchandising for profit] the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Footnote: God still heals in answer to prayer in accordance with His sovereign will and purposes. But the “sign miracles” which were “kingdom demonstrations” were temporary and related only to the ministry of Christ and His apostles. Answered prayer is still a reality, but the gift to heal is not operative. The “sign gifts” are no longer operative.