

OUR PREPARATION TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS

(Matthew 5-20)

- I. Our preparation for the soon coming of Christ and His kingdom (Matt. 24:44; 25:10-13)
 - A. The purposes of the coming of Christ
 1. To accomplish redemption (Zech. 9:9)
 2. To reign in God's kingdom on the earth (Zech. 14:9; Matt. 6:9-10)
 - B. The goal of our preparation – to be kings and priests to reign on the earth, with Christ during the 1,000 years millennial kingdom (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 20:6)
 - C. God's judgment for His people (Rom. 14:10, 12; 2 Cor. 5:9-11)
 1. Begins with His people (1 Pet. 4:17-18)
 2. Not everyone will be qualified (Matt. 7:21-23)
 3. Firstfruits vs. general harvest (Rev. 14:1-5, 14-16; 1 Thess. 4:16-17)
 4. The righteous Judge will give the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:6-8)
 - D. The need to prepare for the coming of the kingdom age (Matt. 5:20; 8:11-12; 21:43; 22:11-14; 24:37-41, 48-51; 25:11-12; 13: 23-29; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal 5:21; Eph 5: 5-6; Rev. 19:7-8)
 1. Born into the kingdom (John 3:3, 5-6)
 2. As kings to know and live the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5-7; 13)
 3. As the priesthood to prepare and offer Christ as spiritual sacrifices to the Father at the appointed times of the feasts (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)
 4. Working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 4:1-2)
 - a. To come to the Lord and receive healing (Matt. 8:1-17; 9:12) through light (Rom. 3:20) and life (Ps. 107:20)
 - b. Advancing in faith and not retreating (Matt. 8:10; Heb. 7:25; 10:19-22, 35-39; 11:6; 12:1-2)

- E. The signs of the times (Matt. 16:1-4; 24:3)
 - 1. The Day should not come like a thief (1 Thess. 5:1-9; Rom. 13:11-14; Luke 21:28; 1 Pet. 4:7)
 - 2. God uses rulers (Dan. 5:21b; 4:25b; Luke 3:1-2)
 - a. Cyrus (Is. 44:28; Ez. 1:1-4)
 - b. Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1-8)
 - c. Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1-7)
 - 3. God's appointed times (Gal. 4:4; John 7:8)
 - a. Christ crucified on the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (John 19:13-16)
 - b. Resurrected on the Feast of Firstfruits (Luke 24:7, 46)
 - c. Poured out the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Acts 2:1)
 - d. Second coming of Christ on the Feast of Tabernacles Zech. 14:16-18)
- II. The necessary proper condition of our being for the kingdom (Matt. 5:3, 8)
 - A. Making an abundant entrance into the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:5-11)
 - B. Poor in spirit
 - 1. Hungry and thirsty for righteousness (Matt. 5:6; John 7:37-39; 5:40; Rev. 21:6; 22:17; Ps. 42:1-2)
 - 2. Constantly asking, seeking and knocking (Matt. 7:7-8; 6:33; <Luke 12:32>)
 - 3. Remaining in constant fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3b; Jude 1:20; 1 Thess. 5:17)
 - 4. Daily walk with the Lord – Prayer (Eph. 6:12, 18; Ps. 141:2; Acts 4:31), reading the word of God and application (Ps. 119:97, 103; James 1:22-25; Heb. 5:13; Eph. 6:17), walking by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-17)
 - C. Pure in heart
 - 1. The fallen condition of man's heart (Matt. 9:4 – evil thoughts <Matt. 5:28; 24:48>; 12:35 – evil treasure; 13:15 – dull; 15:7-8 – far away from God; 15:18-19 – defiled; 19:8 – hardness of heart; 24:48; Heb. 3:12 – wicked and unbelieving; Jer. 17:9 – incurably sick)
 - 2. Come to the Lord Jesus for healing (Matt. 9:12-13; <8:16-17; 15:30>; 11:25-30; 17:5; <21:5; 12:19-20>; Ps. 139:23-24; Jer. 17:14; 30:17)

3. Having the faith of a mustard seed (Matt. 8:5-13; 17:20; Luke 17:5-6)
4. Meekness to receive correction (Matt. 5:5; Heb. 12:5-10; Rom. 15:14)
- D. A new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 11:17-21; 18:31-32; 36:24-28)
 1. A new covenant – to write God’s law within our hearts (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:10-12; 2 Cor. 3:3-6)
 2. To love the Lord our God with our whole heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Matt. 22:36-40)
 3. The relationship between the spirit and the heart (Prov. 20:27; 2 Tim. 1:7)
 4. Spirit of truth (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:13)
 5. The word and the Spirit working together, not only to give us comfort but to expose our condition (Eph. 5:13)
 6. Know the Spirit and power, not admiring and depending on man’s wisdom (1 Cor. 2:4-5)
- III. John the Baptist – the forerunner of Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:1-12; 11:7-11; Is. 40:3)
 - A. Coming in the spirit and power of Elijah (Matt. 3:1-12; 11:14; 17:10-14; Luke 1:17)
 - B. Outside of the religious establishment
 1. Preaching in the wilderness
 2. Clothed in camel’s hair, girded with a leather belt
 3. His food: locusts and wild honey
 - C. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom
 - D. Exposing the “brood of vipers” (Matt. 3:7)
 - E. Preparing the way of the Lord, making the crooked path straight
 - F. The baptism of John – calling for repentance
 - G. The Lord’s faithful church today – the forerunner of the second coming of the King
- IV. Follow the Lord all the way into the kingdom
 - A. John the Baptist – The greatest among all the prophets, but he who is least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he (Matt. 11:11, 13; 1 Pet. 1:10-11; see also Acts 19:1-5)
 - B. The disciples of John the Baptist (Matt. 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39)
 1. Associating with the disciples of the Pharisees
 2. Should have gone over to Jesus

3. The need to continue to receive more revelation of Christ (Phil. 3:7-15)
 - a. The parable of the unshrunk cloth
 - b. The parable of the new wine and the old wineskin
 - c. People prefer old wine – very difficult to change
- C. Be absolute in following the Lord for the kingdom (Matt. 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62)
 1. Not caring for comfort
 2. Not procrastinating
 3. Not looking back
- V. The kingdom of the heavens suffering violence (Matt. 11:12)
 - A. Rejected by that spiritually dead generation (Matt. 11:16-19)
 - B. Fierce opposition of the blind religious leaders (Matt. 2:13-36; 12:14; 22:15; 26:4; 27:1)
 1. The tradition and commandments of the elders (Matt. 15:1-20)
 - a. Nullifying the word of God
 - b. The parable of defilement
 2. The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:5-12)
 3. The full exposure of the evil religion (Matt. chapter 23 <vv. 13, 28-36>)
 4. False prophets and teachers (Matt. 7:15)
 - C. The fierce opposition of politics (Matt. 2:2-3, 16-18; 14:10)
 - D. The strategies of the enemy, Satan, to destroy the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. chapter 13)
- VI. The violent take the kingdom by force (Matt. 11:1-19; 14:1-12)
 - A. The kingdom – a matter of warfare (Eph. 6:10-20)
 - B. Being strengthened in our inner man (Eph. 3:14-21)
 - C. Being equipped with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:4-5)
 - D. Paul's example:
 1. "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22; 21:13; 1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:3-10)
 2. He fought a good fight of the faith (2 Tim. 4:7)
 3. He was poured out as a drink offering (2 Tim. 4:6-8)
 - E. Example of John in Patmos (Rev. 1:9)
- VII. The revelation of Christ the King and the church, His kingdom (Matt. 16:13-28)
 - A. The Father revealed His Son as the Anointed King <Messiah>

1. The Father's good pleasure is to reveal His Son in us (Gal. 1:15-16; Luke 12:32)
 - a. As the Lamb of God – for redemption (John 1:29; Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5)
 - b. As the anointed King (Matt. 16:16) to bring in the heavenly kingdom (John 18:37-38)
 2. The need to be brought out of Jerusalem to Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13)
 - a. Away from the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Matt. 16:6)
 - i. Doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:11; 15:9)
 - ii. Tradition of men (Matt. 15:3, 8-9)
 - b. Coming out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4, Heb. 13:13)
 - c. Following the Lamb wherever He goes (Rev. 14:4b)
 - d. Going on to perfection (Heb. 6:1)
 3. Having a spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:17-23)
 4. The need to learn obedience to the King (Heb. 5:8; Rom. 1:5; Phil. 2:12)
- B. The Son, the King, revealed the church, the kingdom of the heavens
1. Zion – built upon Christ as the foundation and the chief cornerstone – the ROCK (1 Pet. 2:6-7)
 - a. Revelation and experience of Christ
 - b. An unshakeable kingdom (Heb. 12:22-23, 28; Matt. 7:24-25)
 - c. With the saints as living stones (1 Pet. 2:5)
 - d. Built through death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:22)
 - e. Not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17)
 - f. Being diligent to have a rich entrance into the kingdom (2 Pet. 1:10-11)
 2. Having the keys of the kingdom – the authority to bind and to loose
 - a. Putting the whole armor of God to stand against and withstand God's enemies (Eph. 6:12-13)
 - b. Through the prayer of the church (Acts 4:24-31; 1 Pet. 2:5, 23-24)

3. Overcoming the gates of Hades
- C. Following the Lord in the kingdom
 1. Satan trying to use Peter's natural man to hinder the Lord Jesus (Matt. 16:22-27)
 2. The need to deny our "self" and to carry the cross
 3. Losing the soul-life today to gain it for the kingdom
 4. Not loving the world
- D. Living today at the end of the age (Matt. 16:27-28)
 1. Having the possibility of not tasting death
 2. Seeing the coming of the Son of Man in the glory of His kingdom
- E. Our personal growth should result in the care of God's kingdom and His holy priesthood – not only isolated care for our own personal growth (Heb. 10:24)
 1. "My life" is separate from the "church life" – We are baptized into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19)
 2. Kingdom/church vs. my own goals and interests (Phil. 3:7-8)
 3. Elimination of self – "it's not about me" (Matt. 16:24-26; Gal. 2:20)
- VIII. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Pet. 1:16-18)
 - A. The majesty of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus in the glory of His kingdom
 - B. With the presence of Moses and Elijah
 - C. The declaration of the Father from heaven
 1. Jesus, the Son of God, is the only one well-pleasing to the Father
 2. Serious warning to not build three tabernacles
 3. Hearing and seeing Jesus only (Heb. 12:2)
- IX. Who is the greatest in the kingdom (Matt. 18:1-14; 19:13-15; 20:20-28; 21:5; 23:8-12; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 22:24-30)
 - A. The need to be converted and become as little children
 1. As a requirement to enter into the kingdom of the heavens
 2. To humble and lower oneself as a little child – is to be the greatest in the kingdom
 3. Warning not to offend or stumble one of the little ones (see also Mark 9:42; Luke 17:1-2)
 4. Parable of the lost sheep (Matt. 18:10-14)

- B. The request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. 20:20-28)
- C. The example of the King Himself (Matt. 21:5; Zech. 9:9)
- D. The last exhortation (Matt. 23:8-12)
- E. Do not exalt man, particularly servants of the Lord (Acts 10:25-26; 1 Cor 3:1-7)
- F. Faith not in man's wisdom, but in the power of God (Ps. 146:3; 1 Cor 2:1-5)
- X. The practical living of the kingdom life (Matt. 18:15-19:30)
 - A. Dealing with a sinful brother (Matt. 18:15-19)
 - 1. The importance of prayer and forgiveness (Matt. 18:18-20)
 - a. With a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1-5)
 - b. Speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)
 - c. The goal is to gain the brother (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:3-11)
 - 2. The parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21-35; see also Matt. 6:12)
 - a. Forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you (Eph. 4:26, 31-32; Matt. 6:14-15)
 - b. Root of bitterness causes trouble and defiles many (Heb. 12:14-15)
 - B. Marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:3-10)
 - 1. Marriage (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18-24)
 - a. Building proper and good relationship (Eph. 5:22-25, 28, 33; Col. 3:18-19)
 - b. Family unit foundation of the kingdom (Gen. 1:28; 1 Tim. 3:5)
 - 2. Divorce
 - a. Lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16; 2 Tim. 2:22)
 - b. Satan's strategy to break the family unit to destroy the kingdom
 - C. Children – the goal is to bring them to the Lord (Matt. 19:13-15)
 - 1. Pray for them (1 Sam. 1:26-28)
 - 2. Be an example to the children (2 Tim. 1:5)
 - 3. Lay a good foundation with the word and to be faithful (2 Tim. 3:15-17; Titus 1:6)
 - 4. Proper discipline in the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21)
 - 5. They would be preserved for the Lord's coming (1 Thess. 5:23; Phil. 2:15)

D. The rich young man – dealing with covetousness (Matt. 19:16-39; Luke 12:15)

1. Godliness with contentment is great gain – “How much is enough?” (1 Tim. 6:7-10)
 - a. Desire to be rich, fall into temptation and a snare (v. 9)
 - i. Weighed down with the cares of this life (Luke 21:34; Matt. 13:22)
 - ii. Love of money is the root of all evil (v. 10)
 - b. Do not trust in uncertain riches (1 Tim 6:17-19)
 - c. Cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:19-24)
2. Parable of the unjust steward – make friends by unrighteous mammon (Luke 16:1-11)
 - a. Give wisely and cheerfully (Matt. 7:6; 2 Cor. 9:7)
 - b. Faithful to what the Lord has given us (vv. 10-12)
3. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33)

XI. The parable of a landowner hiring workers for His vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16)