

Treasure Hunt

- When in the history of the New Testament do the apostles stop commanding unbelievers to “repent” in order to be saved?
- Give an example of a group of people who repented, and describe what they did.
- What different facets of “the kingdom of heaven” do the apostles present in Acts?
- Why does Matthew talk about the kingdom of heaven rather than the kingdom of God?
- Has the kingdom arrived, or is it still future?

How to Preach the Gospel

John:

Mat 3:2 **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Our Lord:

Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Disciples:

Luk 24:47 **repentance** and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Peter:

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,

Act 3:19 **Repent** ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, ~~when~~ so that the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Act 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give **repentance** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Paul:

Act 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to **repent**:
31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained;

Act 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance** toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Act 26:20 [I] shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

What is “Repentance”?

The Example:

Mat 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they **repented** at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

The History:

Jon 3:4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 So the people of Nineveh **believed** God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them **turn** every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. ... 10 And God saw their works, that they **turned** from their evil way; ...

The Kingdom Promise:

Isa 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked **forsake** his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him (re)**turn** unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Is the requirement for repentance “works salvation”?

The problem:

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Two observations:

1. The author of Eph 2:8,9 (Paul) preaches repentance.
2. What God demands, he also provides:

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”

Did the apostles preach “the kingdom”?

☹️ Their “repent” messages never mention the kingdom.

😊 Neither does John, as presented by Luke (3:3): “[John] came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

😊 Consider other descriptions of the apostolic ministry:

Acts 8:12 Philip preach[ed] the things **concerning the kingdom of God**, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Act 14:22 [Paul and Barnabas] confirm[ed] the souls of the disciples, *and* exhort[ed] them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into **the kingdom of God**.

Act 19:8 [Paul] went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Act 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching **the kingdom of God**, shall see my face no more.

Act 28:23 [Paul] expounded and testified **the kingdom of God**.

Act 28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the **kingdom of God**, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”

“Kingdom” is the act of ruling, not just the territory. Rev 17:18 “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth [hath kingdom] over the kings of the earth.”

Facets of God’s promised rule in the apostolic message:

- **Judging:**

Isa 63:3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For **the day of vengeance is in mine heart**, and the year of my redeemed is come.

Act 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will **judge** the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained;

- **Forgiveness:**

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him (re)turn unto the LORD, and **he will have mercy** upon him; and to our God, for **he will abundantly pardon**.

Luk 24:47 repentance and **remission of sins**

- **Refreshing:**

Isa 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and **the desert shall rejoice, and blossom** as the rose. 2 **It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice** even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God. ... 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: **they shall obtain joy and gladness**, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Act 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that **your sins may be blotted out**, when **the times of refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord;

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”

Only Matthew uses this expression.

Mark, Luke, John: “kingdom of God”

Matthew prefers (32/37) “kingdom of heaven” to emphasize that the rule belongs to the Son as well as the Father

- Matt 28:18 All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”

Perfect tense → “has arrived”

Isa 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:

Mat 11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

But certain facets remain for the future:

Mat 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Act 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, ~~when~~ so that the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Compare the repeated concept of “manifold fulfillment”

We have already “tasted ... the powers of the world to come,” Heb 6:5