



Malkhut HaShamayim

Shalom B'shem Yeshua HaMelech,

The Kingdom of Heaven

The Lord has led us to focus on The Kingdom of Heaven this High Holy Day Season. This very Hebraic concept is a major theme running throughout the Gospels. When Yeshua of Nazareth began to preach, as recorded in Matthew 4:17, His message was a very Jewish message: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* In Hebrew that would be: AoBmL HmBvRmQ OiYxMmwxH TgKvLxM Yik OeKYaKvRxdDiM gBgw

The Gospel of Matthew is the *only* one of the four gospels that uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" since it is the gospel directed to the Jewish people. **The word "heaven" is used instead of "God" out of reverence for the name of God.** Even today, the name of God is held in such high esteem that **traditional Jewish people write G-d or L-rd, showing respect for the holy name of God.** Since Mark and Luke were not writing specifically to Jews, they used the phrase "kingdom of God." Both mean the same thing: God's reign, His rule in the hearts and lives of His people. They are said the same in Hebrew: *malkhut hashamayim* (mal-KHOOT ha-sha-MAH-yeem).

When God is welcomed as King (Hebrew: Melech [MEH-lek]), the kingdom of heaven comes. The Jewish people have always seen God as King – a heavenly King. Psalm 103:19 expresses this belief: *"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all."* Their Messianic expectation, however, included **the belief in a Messiah who would be a king like King David, Mashiach ben David** (Messiah son of David), who would usher in the *malkhut shamayim* on earth by defeating and conquering Israel's enemies with great power and might.

When Yeshua came to earth, He came as *Mashiach ben Yosef* (Messiah son of Joseph), in humility and love, ushering in a kingdom of the heart, defeating the unseen but very real enemies of sin and death. This humble suffering Messiah was spoken of by the Jewish prophet Zechariah: *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey"* (Zechariah 9:9). Yeshua entered Jerusalem the first time on a donkey but He will return as *Mashiach ben David*, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah: *"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war... And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"* (Revelation 19:11; 16).

When Yeshua said that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, He was talking about a very present

reality, not the future kingdom. This kingdom "at hand" would bring the presence of Almighty God to earth in a brand new way, through people who yielded to Yeshua as king of their lives. This reality is expressed in Luke 17:20 and 21 when Yeshua answered the Pharisees' question regarding when the kingdom of God would come: ***"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."***

The kingdom of heaven has been called an invisible influence with a very visible result. Yeshua emphasized this truth in Luke 13:20,21 (a parable explaining the nature of the kingdom of heaven): *"To what shall I liken the kingdom of God (malkhut hashamayim)? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*

When Yeshua sent the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit, upon His waiting talmidim (students or disciples) at Shavuot (Pentecost), His kingdom came in power. An invisible Spirit produced very visible results. He is a treasure giving all believers access to the *malkhut shamayim*. *"...We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."* (2 Corinthians 4:7)

The Messiah-King

The concept of a Messiah-King is deeply rooted in the Hebrew scriptures. Where there is a kingdom, there must be a king. The Rabbis have traditionally perceived the Messiah in Psalm 45, a song of love, when the psalm says, *"I speak of the things which I have made touching the king,"* and *"the nations will praise you for ever and ever"* (vs. 1, 17). The Midrash sees the Messiah-King in verses 1 and 4 of Psalm 21: *"The king shall have joy in Your strength, O Lord; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!"* (vs. 1). *"He asked life from You, and You gave it to him – length of days forever and ever."* (vs. 4) *"This is the Messiah, the Son of David, who has been hidden until the last days... Who is this king?... God will not crown a king of flesh and blood, but the Holy One – may be praised – will give his own crown to the Messiah-King... God will not dress an earthly king in his own purple robe, rather he has given it to the Messiah-King... And he will call the Messiah-King by name, for it is said, 'This is the name by which he will be known: the LORD our Righteousness'."*

Psalm 2 is considered a Messianic psalm by both Jewish and Christian scholars because it speaks of the "anointed one," *Mashiach*, Messiah. The God of Israel proclaims, *"...I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord has said to Me, You are My Son, today I have begotten You"* (vs. 6, 7). *"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him."* (vs. 12)

The missing link in traditional Jewish understanding is the fulfillment by Yeshua of Nazareth of these psalms. He is the Jewish Messiah-King, the One referred to in Psalm 40:7: *"...Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."*

Yeshua HaMashiach was and is the King of the Jews, King of Israel, king of righteousness, king of peace, king of saints, king of glory, King of Kings, the king eternal, immortal and invisible, and the king that comes in the name of the Lord. He is the long-awaited Messiah-King whose kingdom comes into our lives on a daily basis as we live lives of **obedience** and **faith**.

The King and His Kingdom

The word kingdom literally means the king's domain, where the king rules. God's original intent was for man to rule over creation. Adam forfeited this privilege when he ate the forbidden fruit. The authority to rule that Adam lost went to ha satan, the adversary. But God had a plan! He sent His Son, the Messiah-King to earth to regain dominion for man and defeat the devil. The victory was won on the tree of sacrifice (the cross) when Yeshua became our eternal atonement for sin.

As the gospel of Yeshua's kingdom goes forth, His rule is established in the earth. The works of satan are undone. Evil is defeated. The followers of Yeshua have been given the keys of the kingdom of heaven! (Matthew 16:19). **We come into all that our King has for us by repenting of our sin (t'shuvah) – literally turning and going the other way –** in how we both *think* and *act*. The *malkhut shamayim* becomes a living reality to those who surrender totally to the authority, the rule, of King Yeshua. Kingdom believers have a renewed mind, the mind of Messiah. Our thoughts are set on things above, not on things on this earth (I Corinthians 2:16; Colossians 3:1).

"Seeing the Kingdom"

If we are born again, we can see the kingdom! (John 3:3) In Yeshua's most famous discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, the Messiah instructed His talmidim concerning the attitudes that would enable them to fully and joyfully enter into His kingdom reality.

The poor in spirit, those souls who hunger for the reality of God's presence, are told that the malkhut shamayim belongs to them.

Those who mourn will be comforted.

The meek will inherit the earth.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled.

The merciful will obtain mercy.

The pure in heart will see God.

The peacemakers will be called sons of God.

Those persecuted for righteousness sake are happy because the malkhut shamayim is theirs.

Happiness is the portion of all those who, as citizens of heaven, have been saved by grace through faith, and who live by that same faith in an invisible kingdom.

Faith is a key factor in seeing and experiencing the kingdom of heaven. Faith sees the invisible. As Rabbi Shaul said in II Corinthians 4:18, "... for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Yeshua saw with His spirit into the eternal realm. He saw what His Father was doing, and acted accordingly. We can do the same! We can "see" God arranging circumstances in a *pre-believer's* life to bring him or her to Himself. We can "see" God about to bring a soul into His kingdom. We can "see" God wanting to minister lovingkindness to a lonely person. When we "see" these things, in the *invisible* realm, and do what God wants done in the *visible* realm, we are living in the kingdom of heaven. Actually, we are bringing the kingdom of heaven down to earth. Our spirit has been quickened (been made alive) by the Holy Spirit and we follow His lead (as opposed to our mind which may say to us, "That doesn't make sense").

Sometimes our faith needs to be violent – determined – passionate – forceful – aggressive: *"... the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force"* (Matthew 11:12). **Real kingdom faith can not be passive.** As we said last month, we are in a great end-time spiritual battle. The Hebrew word for faith, *emunah* (eigh-mu-NAH), includes the idea of persistence and steadfastness – not giving up. The kingdom of heaven does not invade earth without a struggle. Believing prayer, spiritual warfare, claiming the promises of God's word, staying close to our Messiah-King, and *"seeking first the malkhut shamayim"* (Matthew 6:33), are all elements involved in taking the kingdom by force.

"Thy Kingdom Come..."

Yeshua taught His disciples to pray for the *malkhut shamayim* to come to earth. This would include the reign and sovereignty of God in the hearts of all people, with Yeshua enthroned as "king," a relationship of loving submission. According to Hebrew thinking, however, **there must be both relationship and action in the kingdom of heaven.** Yeshua's actions are well documented in the B'rit Hadasha: *"Then Yeshua 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"* (Matthew 9:35). When we pray for the sick, we are praying for God's kingdom to invade earth. Likewise, when we worship, God's kingdom comes. He inhabits the praises of His people. As the Psalmist: *"But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel."* (Psalm 22:3)

We are in a conflict of kingdoms – the Kingdom of Heaven vs. the kingdom of darkness. The good news is, God always wins. It is amazing that He chooses to use us in the process. Bill Johnson, in his book, **When Heaven Invades Earth** has expressed it this way: "God has chosen to work through us. We are His delegated authority on planet earth, and prayer is the vehicle that gives occasion for His invasion. Those who don't pray allow darkness to continue ruling." **PRAY – that the malkhut shamayim comes into your life, your family, your neighborhood, your city, your country, your congregation and everywhere you go. PRAY NOW!**

Sukkot and the Kingdom to Come

Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, is celebrated in 2006 from October 6th - October 16th. This feast of the Lord foreshadows the future Messianic Kingdom that will be established when Yeshua returns to earth (see Matthew 24 and 25). Sukkot is called "The Season of Our Joy" and celebrates God tabernacling with His people. It looks forward to the time when God will rule over the **entire** earth.

The day is coming when *"... the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be – 'The Lord is one,' and His name one"* (Zechariah 14:9). The Jewish prophet Zechariah tells us: *"...that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Sukkot"* (Zechariah 14:16).

A time of great weeping, distress and tribulation will be followed by a time of great joy as the Messiah-King, Yeshua, reigns from His chosen city, Jerusalem. The entire earth will become, as it were, His *sukkah* (tabernacle). A glorious time lies ahead as the *malkhut shamayim* invades Jerusalem: *"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying"* (Isaiah 65:18-19). *"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, says the*

Lord." (Isaiah 65:25)

This future kingdom is what Peter, James and John caught a glimpse of on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5). They saw Yeshua, the Messiah-King, coming in His kingdom, with Moses and Elijah after 6 days (6,000 years!). That is why Peter suggested making three *sukkot*... We're getting close! In Jewish tradition, this is the year 5767 (some rabbis contend this number is too low).

The Messiah will be crowned King at the beginning of a thousand year kingdom, as prophesied by the prophet Daniel in chapter 7:13-14: *"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."*

We have the opportunity to crown Yeshua king **today**. Our prayer for you is that all our Jewish Jewels partners and your loved ones **submit to the kingship of our Messiah-King** and experience the thrill of daily living in the malkhut shamayim. The kingdom of heaven is at hand!

His servants and yours,

Neil and Jamie

P.S. Two anointed CDs: **Israel My Beloved** by Karen Davis, well-known worship leader at a Messianic Congregation on Mount Carmel in Israel, draws the believer into the shelter of the Almighty. Matthew Casey's **In the Father's Arms** ministers the Father's heart of love, hope and healing to the listener.

P.P.S. We think Henry Einspruch's translation of Matthew's gospel is one of the best ways to reach out to pre-believing Jewish people. It is rich with hebraic illustrations and all the prophetic verses are included in Hebrew. Order one for yourself and one to sow as seed in someone's life.