

Calling forth Signs of New Life

Thomas Robinson, *Behold Your King* 8, February 3, 2019

Matthew 4:12-25

¹² Now when **Jesus** heard that **John had been arrested**, he withdrew into **Galilee**. ¹³ And leaving **Nazareth** he went and lived in **Capernaum** by the sea, in the territory of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali**, ¹⁴ so that what was said through **Isaiah** the prophet might be **filled** with meaning:

¹⁵ *“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, road of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations (Gentiles) –*

*¹⁶ the people who are sitting in **darkness***

*saw **a great light**,*

*and for those sitting in a region and **shadow of death**,*

***light dawned** for them.” [Isa 9:1-2]*

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, **“Change your way of thinking** (repent), for **the kingdom of the heavens** has come near.”

¹⁸ As he was walking by the **Sea of Galilee**, he saw two **brothers**, **Simon**, who’s called **Peter** (Rock) and **Andrew** his brother, throwing a casting-net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, **“Come after me**, and I’ll make you fish for people.”

²⁰ Immediately, they **left** their nets and **followed him**.

²¹ And going on from there he saw two other **brothers**, **James** (Jacob) the son of Zebedee and **John** (Yohanan) his brother, in the boat with **Zebedee their father**, repairing their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately when they left the boat and their father, they followed him.

²³ And he began traveling through all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues and **proclaiming** the **Good News** of the **kingdom** and **healing** every disease and every affliction among the people.

²⁴ And the **report** about him went out into the whole of Syria, and they brought him all who were in a bad way, afflicted with various diseases and torments, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and **he healed them**.

²⁵ And great **crowds** followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Isaiah 9:1-3, 6-7

¹ ... In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the road of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.... ⁵ Every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult ... will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the governing shall be on his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it ... with justice ... forevermore.

Revelation 21:24 – 22:2

²⁴ And the nations will walk by the light (of God’s City), and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. ... ²⁶ They’ll bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. ...^{22:1} Then he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb ² through the middle of the city’s street. Also, he showed on either side of the river the tree of life producing twelve kinds of fruit, ... and the leaves of the tree are for healing the nations.

Matthew 9:35

²³ And he was traveling to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

Behold Your King!

Mt has been preparing us to see Jesus as the Messiah (Anointed king) as he brings in God's Kingdom: New teaching and power (Mt 9:35). 2000 yr genealogy. King Herod (empire and violence) and the infant Messiah (sought by nations, exiled, sharing grief). Faith in God who fulfills promises in unexpected ways. John proclaims repentance & kingdom, but confronts religious leaders. But John points beyond himself. God's anointing with Spirit at baptism. Like Israel, Jesus is tested in the wilderness by the Accuser, the world's way of thinking.

Now John is handed over to Antipas' prison. Jesus takes up his message on one level, but transforms it. He leaves the wilderness for the towns of Galilee, tribes of Zebulun, Naphtali.

A Transformed Vision of Repentance

Mt uses Isa 9:1-2. Light breaking out in unexpected places. Darkness and light: Insight into what is really happening. Isaiah's 700+ yrs-old vision are filled up by this new/old story.

A vision awaits filling up. Antipas arrests John to stop his Kingdom message. Like is father Herod responded to the infant. The Romans push in with power. How do you fight darkness?

What is real light? Much of Israel wanted violent resistance to violence. Fight Antipas and Rome with their weapons. It's the only reality. Is there a different way? Can new light really dawn?

Jesus calls for repentance: Changing course. Learning to think differently, act differently. God really is king. Life changes. Jesus teaches that change of thought & action in Sermon on Mt.

Call and Response – How do You Prepare for a Kingdom?

Think about it. You're announcing a dangerous message of a Kingdom. You want it to work.

What do you do? You gather resources: Best advisors, leaders, teachers. Plan strategy of attack. The old kingdom won't just surrender. Jesus calls fishermen! They're not ready. They must follow and be transformed into new identity. Leave behind father/normal allegiances.

What if you were a fisherman? Would you follow? This is crazy! A rebel kingdom with no army?

Would you risk life, livelihood, family? But they hear something, see something in Jesus.

They bring with them their old expectations, dreams, but they get close behind Jesus.

Nobody around Jesus has in their mind a paradigm for what is happening, what Jesus is doing.

He's not recruiting to take over an old kingdom. God's kingdom's here, breaking in – by means they can't yet imagine. Jesus doesn't seek advisors who already "know," but people who can really learn and live out a new vision. It's a long process in every human being.

The Crowds and the Sign of Healing

If you're trying to bring a new kingdom, you don't want to alert present authorities. But Jesus proclaims the Kingdom as Good News throughout Galilee: "A Great Light" shines in the darkness. He's not yet in Jerusalem, but he certainly makes no secret of what he's doing.

But he doesn't recruit a guerilla army in the hills (like the Maccabees or Zealots). Healing is the sign of the inbreaking of God's kingdom! All kinds! People oppressed by everything from pain to seizures, paralysis, and demons. This is a kingdom that frees people freely with a level and kind of authority that not even Rome's Emperor could wield. An outbreak of life and hope!

And people come with all their needs, not for revenge but for life. From Gentile areas and Jewish. God's kingdom is breaking in. Totally different! Can we even imagine what the signs point to?