

KINGDOM RULE

Matthew 7:24-29

Last week we began a three-week series considering Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, a series encouraging us to look back to Jesus' teaching to help us move forward into the new year. We spent time last week exploring the reality of the kingdom that formed the heart of Jesus' teachings. We continue our focus on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in this lesson by considering the rule over the kingdom he talked about in his sermon, which outlines an important message – *God has given Jesus rule over the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus' authority over the kingdom of heaven

- Jesus' Sermon on the Mount outlined features of "the kingdom of heaven"¹ (*cf. Matthew 5:3*), the kingdom on which his ministry focused (*Matthew 4:17, 23*).
- Even though "the kingdom of heaven" expressed God's sovereign rule (*cf. Matthew 5:34, 16, 45, 48; 6:1; 7:11, 21*), Jesus taught about the kingdom in his sermon "as one who had authority" (*Matthew 7:28-29*).
 - Matthew emphasizes Jesus' authority by recounting the Sermon on the Mount in a way that intentionally parallels Moses' presentation of God's covenant on Mount Sinai. Consider the way Matthew composed his gospel in the chapters leading up to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount:
 - God directed Jesus' parents on an exodus from Galilee to Egypt in a way that paralleled His directing Moses to lead Israel on an exodus from Egypt to Canaan (*Matthew 2:13-15; Exodus 3:1-10*).
 - Jesus spent forty days being tested in the wilderness in a way that paralleled Israel's forty years of testing in the wilderness (*Matthew 4:1-11; Deuteronomy 8:2-3*).
 - Jesus delivered his teaching about God's law from a mountain in a way that paralleled Moses' delivery of God's covenant on a mountain (*Matthew 5:1ff; Exodus 19ff.*).
 - The parallels Matthew created between Jesus and Moses emphasizes a difference between their authorities – unlike Moses who taught under God's authority, Jesus taught with his own authority (*cf. Matthew 5:18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 6:2, 5, 16, 25, 29*).
 - **Jesus assumed authority over the kingdom** – people have petition him for entrance (*Matthew 7:21-23*).
 - **Jesus conditioned entrance into the kingdom on obedience to his teachings** (*Matthew 7:24-27*).

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.



- **Jesus assumed an authoritative relationship with the Law of Moses** (*cf. Matthew 5:21-48*). However:
 - While he possessed God’s authority (*Matthew 28:18; Mark 2:1-12; John 5:26-27; 17:1-2*), Jesus also taught that his authority was not independent of God but in partnership with Him (*John 5:19, 30; 8:28*).
 - Even while he gave people teachings they were to follow (“I say to you”), Jesus maintained a strict standard of obedience to God’s law (*Matthew 5:17-19*).
 - The balance between Jesus’ authoritative teachings and his expectation of strict obedience to God’s law lies in his identity as the person transitioning between God’s covenants.
 - Jesus was the conclusion to the Law of Moses and would introduce a new covenant (*Matthew 5:17-19; 26:26-29; Hebrews 7:1-22; Galatians 6:2*).
 - Jesus’ ministry takes place under the Mosaic law and worked to prepare people for the change to the “Law of Christ” (*cf. Galatians 3:10-29; 6:2*).
- The authority Jesus displayed in the Sermon on the Mount points to an important truth – **citizenship in God’s “kingdom of heaven” depends on obedience to Jesus’ rule.**

Applications

- Jesus’ authority reveals that he is not only our savior; he is also our king.
- Jesus is thus a savior to be loved and a king to be obeyed (*cf. John 14:15*).
- Jesus’ authority concerns itself with our love and obedience, with our motives and actions (*cf. Matthew 5:28; 7:21-23*).
- Jesus’ authority cannot be circumvented (*cf. Matthew 7:21-23*).
- While Jesus’ authority carries strict standards that must be met, he exercises it in ways that provides security and protections to those who submit to it (*Matthew 7:24-27*).

God has given Jesus authority over the kingdom of heaven, which he seeks to populate with people who lovingly submit themselves to his benevolent rule. We can therefore easily assess our claim of citizenship in Jesus’ kingdom by asking ourselves the following question, “Does my life reveal that I have submitted my motives and actions to his will?”

