

The Program of King Messiah

Matthew 4: 17

The Holy One, blessed be He, will sit and expound [on] the new Torah that He will give through the Messiah. "New Torah" means the secrets and the mysteries of the Torah which have remained hidden until now" (Midrash Talpiot 58a).³⁷⁴

After His baptism and subsequent forty days of testing in the wilderness, Yeshua had completed His required preparation and then began His actual messianic program for Israel. From that time on, Yeshua began proclaiming: **Turn from your sins to God, for the kingdom of Heaven is near** (Matthew 4:17 CJB). Turning from sin is the key element in traditional Judaism. Repentance (*t'shuvah*) covers more than merely a change of heart, but actually turning and going in a different direction. **Turn** (*shuv*) is the key word for the book of **Jeremiah**, as the weeping prophet tried in vain to persuade rebellious Isra'el to repent from her destructive path. In the messianic program, the call is to **turn** from that which misses the spiritual mark that **ADONAI** has placed before us. It is important to note that Isra'el was not called to convert to a different religion or a different **God**; but rather, to **turn** around and *come back* to the **God** of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Mattityahu uses the phrase, **the kingdom of Heaven** rather than **the Kingdom of God** because he was speaking to a Jewish audience. Jews then, as well as many today, avoided using the word **God**. Some substitute the name **ADONAI**, **the LORD**, or **HaShem**, meaning *the Name*, for **God's** name. If they are writing in English, they will write it as **G-d**, out of reverence for **His** name. **Matthew's** intended audience would understand his substitution of the word **heaven** rather than the word **G-d**. Consequently, **the kingdom of God** and **the kingdom of Heaven** effectively mean the same thing. Establishing **the kingdom of Heaven** has been the foundational hope given to Isra'el in the Torah (**Exodus 19:6**), the Prophets (**Isaiah 11:1-9**) and the Writings (**First Chronicles 29:11**). It only makes sense for Jews to conclude, therefore, that **the Messiah** would be **the King** over **His Kingdom** on earth (**Isaiah 9:6**). Since **Yeshua** was the promised **King Messiah**, it was not surprising that **He** started **His** public ministry with an announcement that **His Kingdom** was **near**.