



The Gospel According To Matthew

“The kingdom of the heavens is at hand.”  
-Matthew 4:17

August 26, 2007  
Group Reflection Questions

1. Where do people say heaven is?
2. What does the word repent mean to you?
3. Why is the message of the kingdom of the heavens light to the people living in darkness?
4. How does Jesus fulfill Isaiah's words?
5. How has this passage challenged your understanding of the kingdom of the heavens?

**The Heavens**  
**Matthew 4:12-25**

Where is heaven? Have you ever thought about that question before? Heaven, at least as many of us think about it, doesn't get a lot of ink in the Old Testament. Not until the Babylonians take Judah (the only remaining part of Israel) do they start to get a concept of the universal nature of God. Yahweh rules over everything in the heavens and the earth. The Babylonians have enslaved them and moved them from the promised land. At this lowest point in their nation, they realized God total control over everything.

Between the Old and New Testaments, people begin to formalize the idea of several heavens: The air and sky; the sun, moon, and stars, and the place where the heavenly host lives. Sometimes these heavens were broken down into 7 or 10 heavens. So now, Jesus proclaims, “the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” (Almost every English translation turns “the heavens” into “heaven.”) So what's his point? The kingdom of God is in all the heavens. The kingdom of God is in the air right around us. Now we need to note, this is a spirit kingdom which we will have to unpack later. But for now know this, the kingdom of God is as close as your hand.

