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The Kingdom of God Reflected in the Gospels

Donald George Ashton

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD REFLECTED
IN THE GOSPELS

BY

Donald George Ashton

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Division of Graduate Instruction
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INTRODUCTION
to the
KINGDOM OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

Little inquiry is essential to discover the major significance and prominence that the Kingdom of God assumes in the studies of the modern scholar who is concerned with the paramount aspects of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the specific features of the prophetic pronouncements as set forth in the general thesis of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The origin of this emphasis can be related closely to the studies of "Kant and Schleirmacher, particularly in the school of A. Ritschl, but also among theologians generally, e. g. Lepsius, Oosterzee, Maurice"¹ The abundance of material and studies related to this subject, approached from a variety of angles, in their very magnitude, emphasizes the prominence and high evaluation that has been conceded to this field of study. "It was primary with Jesus himself, and when we look beneath the surface it was no less so with Paul and the later teachers."² The scholars of the succeeding generations catching the spirit of emphasis have given it a rightful place. We feel no better subject could be suggested for a thorough study with such a sufficiency of material and yet

¹J. Orr, "Kingdom of God," Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings, Vol. II (1899), p. 844.

²Ernest F. Scott, The Kingdom of God in the New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 5.

with the mystery of the kingdom still to be understood.

The whole cloth of Christ's religious emphasis is woven from the skein of the essential threads of the Kingdom of God. Thus in seeking to set forth this paper our task will be related to the most vital aspect of Christianity and will use as the potent materials these Biblical elements which disclose this Kingdom of Jesus. The manner of approach will be through the Old Testament, its prophecies, and then through the teachings of Jesus as revealed in the four Gospel accounts.

This kingdom, about which we are here concerned, is a growing thing, a principle working from the mind of God through the inward parts of man. It has definite steps of progression and can be sharply distinguished by lines of demarcation. Orr states these various progressive stages thus: ". . . . here in a general view we readily distinguish as successive the patriarchal, the Mosaic, the royal, and the prophetic periods in the growth of this conception."¹

There is, however, a general continuity in every reference to the kingdom whether made by prophet, priest, or king. "The kingdom of God is the master-conception, the master-plan, the master-purpose, the master-will that gathers everything up into itself and gives redemption, coherence, purpose, goal."² The general continuity is

¹Orr, op. cit., p. 846.

²E. S. Jones, Is the Kingdom of God Realism? (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1940), p. 53.

discovered in the Master. The disharmony is revealed in the weakness of man as the spokesman for God.

. . . . putting aside these details [That is, the apparent disharmonies] and making allowances for discrepancies, we find that there is a kind of general scheme common to the Messianic teaching of Israel. It implies the setting up on earth of a new order of things and of a new mode of life: a transformation of the world, beneficial not only to the righteous and the godly who are alive at the moment of its appearance, but also to the righteous dead who will rise again to enjoy the Kingdom (malkuth) of God.¹

However, this general continuity must be broken up into stages as the growth of the idea evolves and develops under the Master's intended purpose. This developmental process has been expressed by several scholars, each making an arbitrary selection, but most concretely revealed by Charles.

. . . . we have now the three chief notes of the coming kingdom of God. First, this kingdom was to be a kingdom within men -- and so far to be a kingdom realised on earth. Secondly, it was to be worldwide and to ignore every limitation of language and race. Thirdly, it was to find its true consummation in the world to come.²

Slowly, but progressively, the ideal is worked out to the master plan; from the law, while man was in infancy and childhood, through to the glorious manhood found in the Kingdom of Glory where the end in God's way is done.

The time will come when all mankind will bow to his rule, and do homage to him alone, and obey his laws. Then the reign of God will be universal; the end of all God's ways, the goal of human history will be attained.³

¹Charles Guignebert, The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus, trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1939), p. 328.

²R. H. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and New Testament (New York: Henry Holt & Co.), p. 71.

³George Foote Moore, Judaism, II, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), p. 372.

This is the Biblical ideal. Never in history is the kingdom ideal last. It is the highway of God which men travel.

In our efforts to set forth the kingdom of God this is the procedure we shall follow. It is our aim to form a correct understanding of the kingdom and to relate it directly to the life and study of the Church as related to the Kingdom of God. To find this rightful place and to give it functional activity in modern society we have chosen to begin with the kingdom expressed before the time of Christ since ". . . . 'the Kingdom of Heaven'. . . . can only be considered in the light of their use of the literature which preceeded. . . ." ¹ as well as to consider later what followed in the days of His ministry in flesh.

The message of the Kingdom was never lost. We can trace it all through the New Testament and afterwards as the great highroad along which Christian thought has never ceased to travel. ²

It is essential not only to consider the New Testament teaching, the prophetic expectations with their variety of elements, but to reach back into the patriarchal age to find the beginnings of the concept later exposed in the gospel writings. As most of the doctrinal uses of the New Testament can be found in and understood by the history of the Jewish Nation and God's government of them, it is expedient that some use be made of the Old Testament background.

¹William West Holdsworth, Gospel Origins, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 195.

²Scott, op. cit., p. 130.

Thus we begin, as we suggested with the experiences of the Old Testament as a historical shadow of what Jesus intended to reveal in the coming of the kingdom of heaven. From this background, we move to the kingdom revealed by the Synoptics with our greatest emphasis here placed on Matthew, and then to a comparative study of John. To climax the study we find it urgent that some relation be drawn between the Kingdom of God and the Church of Christ. If our method is simple we hope our conclusion will thus be made more evident and reliable.

Before we begin our paper proper, some definition should be given to the terms that are employed to express our concept of God's work.

The expression 'kingdom of heaven' (מְלָכּוּת שָׁמַיִם) is typically Hebrew, and this Hebrew character is apparent in its Greek form which employs the plural (βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν) to translate the Hebrew dual form is מְלָכּוּת. The Jews of the time habitually used 'heaven' to avoid having to pronounce the name God; so 'the kingdom of heaven' meant 'the kingdom of God' or 'the kingdom of the Almighty;¹

We believe very little difficulty exists over the use of the two terms "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven." We accept in this study the general contention that there is no distinction meant in the interchange of terms used in the New Testament: The two are used interchangeably, particularly in the first gospel. Cohon expresses the general contention

Malchuth Shamayim or kingdom of Heaven (Aramaic, malchuth dishemaya, and Greek basileia ton ouranon),

¹Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, trans. Herbert Danby (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946), p. 245.

is one of the master words of Jewish Theology. The word 'Heaven' in this combination is a substitute for God (Dan. 4:23) and is a metonymy for God of Heaven, expressing the widely current idea of heaven as the seat of the highest Divinity. It refers not to the transcendent character of God's kingdom but to the sovereignty of the transcendent God. . . .¹

With this expressed knowledge of the greatness of our subject, and the manner in which we intend to deal with the material we gather from the best minds we have available, we launch into the quest of the kingdom.

¹Samuel S. Cohon, "Kingdom of Heaven," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isaac Landman, in Collaboration, Vol. 6, (New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Inc., 1942), p. 386.

CHAPTER I

THE KINGDOM IDEA AMONG THE JEWS

CHAPTER I

THE KINGDOM IDEA AMONG THE JEWS

The Kingdom of God must have its infancy, its beginnings. Whether the kingdom is thought of as past, present, or future, there must be a beginning. Where that beginning is in the history of God is the profound question. Moreover, where that period is located in the history of man and where God revealed His Kingdom to man is of pronounced importance and must be determined in order for a basis upon which to build a thesis.

In a very real sense, God was King of His creation. This kingship is recognized by some scholars who have made a thorough study of the kingdom of God. The original people were His people and these people recognized their ownership as they offered their thanks to God, made their confessions, and supplicated pardon. Adam and his sons were conscious of this relationship; Adam's weakness is a revelation of his sonship and dependence on God, as also Cain's and Abel's difficulties are over their sacrifice and offerings to God.¹ This early kinship Moore indicates when he writes, "God is de jure king over all the earth from creation on. . . ."² In the creation story, God laid the foundation of what occurs

¹Gen. 4: 1-10.

²Moore, op. cit., p. 372.

in the life of the Jewish nation and later develops into the revelation of the life of Christ. This is supported by Orr, who states, "The real basis for the idea of the Kingdom of God is already laid in the creation story."¹ Later, Abraham expressed fully this ownership as he gave tithes to Melchizedek.²

For a full understanding and development of this kingship or institution, Genesis the twelfth chapter points up the two promises that God developed through Abraham.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.³

God promised that in Abraham the nation of Jews would be blessed-- here is the Jewish kingdom idea -- and also the kingship of Jesus. Maybe only "Glimpses of the coming Kingdom of God" are revealed " in the historical writings, even those which deal with the remote past,"⁴ but certainly a shadow or glimpse is herein seen. A much more elaborate account is found in other writings as " from Amos onward," ⁵ where details are more specific and definite. Thus Westcott proves "At each Crisis in the providential history of the world this promise

¹Orr, op. cit., p. 844.

²Gen. 14: 20.

³Gen. 12: 1-3.

⁴G. H. Gilbert, "Kingdom of God," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, Vol. II (1915), p. 732.

⁵Ibid.

was brought within narrower limits, and illustrated by fresh details."¹

The first crystallization or formalization of the kingdom took place at the Siniatic experience. Here it was the Jewish institution commenced, here it was that His people acclaimed Him king. Other nations and people recognized that deity had a place as king, says Cohon, as it is found "in the literature of Egypt, Babylonia, South Arabia, and other countries, and was applied early by Israel to God."² But as urged above "His acclamation as the nation's king dates from Sinai. . . ."³ The idea of the kingdom was dormant until this revival of nationalism expressed on Mt. Sinai. Here ". . . . the requisite conditions were fulfilled and a kingdom of God or true theocracy, starts for the first time into visible existence."⁴ Moses conveyed the wishes of God concerning this kingship to the people as he relates "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."⁵

Other assumptions of the kingship are indicated in the Old Testament writings.

Behind the ideal kingdom of God, which appears in the prophets and psalmists, there had doubtless been, as

¹Brooke Foss Westcott, Introduction to the Study of the Gospels (New York: The Macmillan & Co., 1880), p. 110.

²Cohon, op. cit., p. 386.

³Ibid.

⁴Orr, op. cit., p. 846.

⁵Exodus 19:6. See also Deut. 33:5.

the author of 1 S 8⁷ assumes, the conception that Jehovah was Israel's King: This is found in the ancient song of Balaam (Nu 32 2¹);¹

There comes a definite confusion into the kingdom idea as the prophets begin to relate it to the experiences of their day and to preach and prophesy of the coming of the ideal kingdom. According to the emphasis essentially required by world conditions, there evolved a religious, nationalistic, and monarchial ideal.²

It is very evident that among the prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zephaniah, and even some in the Psalms, there is no orthodox or universally accepted doctrine on the kingdom of God. "One beautiful idealistic prophecy, inserted both in Mic. 4: 1-4a and in Is. 2: 2-4, envisioned the Kingdom of God on earth as an era of peace, when all nations would unite in a pilgrimage to Zion to learn the Law of the Lord; a narrow-minded Jew, however, added a gloss (4: 4b-5) denying the heathen's conversion."³ This is cause enough for confusion in the Old Testament concept and makes a definite statement impossible as to their policies for ". . . . other Jews regarded the coming Golden Age as restricted to their nation, either with or without a personal Messiah."⁴ Guignebert adds weight to this position when he states ". . . . no fixed or orthodox view

¹Gilbert, op. cit., p. 732.

²Robt. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 593.

³Ibid., pp. 593-94.

⁴Ibid., p. 594.

controlled the variety of private opinions in the period under discussion."¹ This is also evident in the sundry manner in which other scholars have classified the teachings of the prophetic Jews.

Charles and Greenstone limit the conception of the prophets to a local condition on the present earth with its eternal blessings within the framework of Israel. "Its members were not to enjoy immortality but lives of patriarchal duration."² This particular conception Greenstone credits to the "early prophets"³ leaving room for the development that comes with the prophetic experience of the Assyrian, Syrian, and Babylonian influences.

Hughes is even more restrictive. "The expectation of most of the prophets is that the kingdom will be established by a tried and proved remnant, after a world judgment in which Yahweh acts directly or through the Messianic warrior-prince."⁴ This limited view is found in Micah 2: 13; Jeremiah 8: 19, where they "spoke of the future beyond the day of evil."⁵ It is, however, later expanded after the "first prophets," who spoke at about the time of Assyrian power. "The reign of God, which was limited at first to Israel (cf. Micah 2: 13: Jer. 8: 19: Zeph. 3: 15) expanded God of Israel came to be recognized as the only God and the Ruler

¹Guignebert, op. cit., p. 154.

²Charles, op. cit., p. 49.

³Julius H. Greenstone, The Messiah Idea in Jewish History (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1906), pp. 28-9.

⁴H. M. Hughes, The Kingdom of Heaven (London: The Epworth Press, 1922), p. 28.

⁵Gilbert, op. cit., p. 732.

of mankind (Ju. 10: 7, 10; Ps. 47: 8; cf. Amos 1 and 2)."¹ This expression of a universal kingdom is found very often in the later prophets and is recognized by most scholars. Cohon,² Gould,³ Gilbert,⁴ and Pfeiffer⁵ all point to the development of this universal element.

Looking as we are in this paper to the eventual climax found in the Gospels, a statement by Pfeiffer will also support the foregoing paragraph.

Christianity cannot be understood without the Second Isaiah. [Second Isaiah being one of the later writers] Moreover, he passed on to Christianity, as well as to Judaism, the element of hope in religion, the outlook on a coming Golden Age, the doctrine of the Kingdom of God on earth to which all men, without distinction of race, are called.⁶

It has been contended by many that the kingdom's development can be clearly pointed up by the outside influences that come to bear upon the Jewish teachings. Allowing that God occasionally uses extreme pressures to bring about His will, then there is more truth than might meet a casual study.

For instance, Gilbert points to three very clear-cut experiences that molded the kingdom ideal:⁷ First, the approach of the Assyrian power (722-701), Second, the fall of Jerusalem (586), Third, the destruction of the Babylonian kingdom of

¹Cohon, op. cit., pp. 386-87.

²Ibid.

³Ezra P. Gould, "Gospel According to St. Mark," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1896), p. 16.

⁴Gilbert, op. cit., p. 735.

⁵Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 480.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Gilbert, op. cit., p. 732.

Cyrus (538). In view of the first, he contends that Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah prophesied of a kingdom of God. In view of the second Jewish catastrophe he maintains Jeremiah wrote. And, in view of the destruction in 538, he says they were concerned with Babylonia, and parts of the Psalms and Isaiah 40 - 66 were written here.

This same thought is given by Greenstone. During the Syrian episode they are influenced greatly by the bitter persecution to hate the Gentile and eliminate them from Messianic hope.¹ Following the Babylonian experience, "Everywhere new life is seen, new government, new doctrines, new customs and ceremonies."² At this period, the Jews became so engrossed with a revival of all they professed that little time was devoted to a consideration of the problem.³

Many other writers credit influences with molding Jewish prophetic thought during this extended period. They are worthy of mention.

Guignebert points to at least three foreign thoughts that brought modification into Jewish theology. "The Jews took over from the Persian conception several features which can be found in the splendours of the Kingdom of God."⁴ Others also feel this Persian influence was important which we will mention later. Next Guignebert says Egypt could have been

¹Greenstone, op. cit., p. 73.

²Ibid., p. 52.

³Ibid., p. 56.

⁴Guignebert, op. cit., pp. 1-32.

the one which gave Judaism the Messiah idea.¹ And then he adds that there is Hellenic influence particularly upon the Jewish apocalyptic. "Thus in the Book of the Secret of Enoch, or the Slovonie Enoch. . . ."²

The Persian influence finds a place in Otto's writings³ and those of Kaufmann Kohler. "The kingdom of God, however, in order to be established on earth, requires recognition by man: That is, to use the Hasedaen phrase borrowed from Babylonia or Persia, man must 'take upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of God'"⁴

This Persian influence is definitely refused by Greenstone for the reason, he says, that it is "quite unlike the sordid belief of the Persian Magi."⁵ He seems to be in the minority as Jackson and Lake say the Persian influence can be seen especially in the destruction of our present world by fire and the doctrine of resurrection.⁶ Presumably, all who see some eastern doctrine in the Jewish doctrine of the kingdom, place it there because of the

¹Guignebert, op. cit., pp. 1-32.

²Ibid.

³Rudolph Otto, The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man, trans. Floyd V. Filson and Bertran Lee Woolf (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House), p. 36.

⁴Kaufmann Kohler, "Kingdom of God," Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer and 400 other ed., Vol. II (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1904), p. 502.

⁵Greenstone, op. cit., p. 57.

⁶Jackson and Lake, Beginnings of Christianity, ed. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, Vol. I (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), p. 275.

see also Otto, op. cit., p. 14.

Captivity in Babylonia. It does seem likely while in a region saturated with Persian and Chaldean ideas that some should enter into the Jewish thought. It does in no manner of reasoning eliminate the intent of God to color Jewish thought by heathen philosophy, but rather, adds to the wisdom and greatness of God.

Other writers on this subject go back to a more ultimate source.

. . . . The late Jewish apocalyptic was not purely Jewish, if one understands by that term something which derived and developed from purely Israelite traditions. Rather, being a late Jewish form, it was inherited from ancient Judaism, but with an intrusive element which came not from that source but from the Chaldean and Iranian east. Indeed, at first, it had a remoter origin, viz. in ancient Aryan sources, and these arose prior to the separation of Aryans into Iranians and Indians. The intrusive element was the great Aryan eschatology of Iran, vitalized by Chaldean features, in particular, as manifested in the doctrinal term 'the kingdom.'¹

Pfeiffer in a study of Isaiah also gives less credence to the Babylonian consideration indicated by Jackson - Lake, Otto, Guignebert, as mentioned above, although Otto² does turn to the more ultimate source as more probable. Pfeiffer says, "Less probable than the presence of echos of Babylonian writings in Is. 40 - 55 is the alleged influence of Zoroastrianism on the thought of our author."³ As a secondary source, Pfeiffer quotes

¹Otto, op. cit., p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 469.

A. von Gall who ". . . . believes that our author [Isaiah] derived his idea of the Kingdom of God from the teaching of Zoroaster and that the Servant of the Lord is a reflection of Gojomart, the Persian 'Adam.'"¹

Here is evidence that it is generally agreed among the best scholars on the Old Testament kingdom that some outside influences played a part in molding the Jewish ideas. The consideration given to Persia, Egypt, Zoroaster and even the "ancient Aryan figure of Asura"² by so many scholars as valid influences upon the Jewish ideas makes one conclude that there must be an element present to indicate this relationship.

Whether it be in spite of, or because of, these influences upon the doctrine of the kingdom of God among the Jews, there is a constant change, a growth toward a fuller concept that expresses itself in the variety of teachings among all the Jews. The universalism, the particularism, the present and the future, the Messianic and the Davidic expectancies, each and all grow into an abundant hope for Jews as well as Gentiles. "At all points the ideal kingdom is an idealization of the greatest facts of Israel's past."³ This idealization of history into the present brought the hope of Israel to a climax: This climax would be a new world. How it would be, or when, are peculiarly confused. But the prophets of the Old Testament "were thus contemplating

¹Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 469.

²Otto, op. cit., p. 22.

³Gilbert, op. cit., p. 732.

a genuine polegenesis, the rebirth both of the world and of mankind. The new order would persist for as long as the Covenant itself should last, that is to say eternally."¹

Some of the unorthodoxies should be noted in order that the Spirit of the Kingdom may be captured at the time Jesus came into the world to dwell among men in flesh.

The great difference first noted between Jeremiah and Ezekiel which was later carried forward even into the early church is reported by Charles.

Thus Jeremiah and Ezekiel founded or rather refounded two very diverse schools of development. Jeremiah taught universalism, that is, that God's gracious purposes embraced all mankind, and that Zion was to be a spiritual mother of the nations: Ezekiel taught particularism, that is, that the Jews only were the objects of God's love.²

This difference is still apparent in the Church at Jerusalem after Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The Jerusalem Conference settled the matter for future time for those who had failed to capture Christ's teaching.

A little confusion exists in the hope expressed for a Davidic dynasty: There was the thought that the Messiah would reinvest the Jews with a restoration of this particular dynasty. This is prominent, says Pfeiffer, in some oracles.³ While Greenstone admits the Davidic emphasis, he says it is the ideal or the model for all time.⁴

¹Guignebert, op. cit., pp. 127-28.

²Charles, op. cit., p. 68.

³Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 594.

⁴Greenstone, op. cit., p. 25.

This Davidic model or restoration was looked upon by some as having an eschatological meaning.¹ Finally, a modified concept took the general thinking as a result of the "successive disappointments of the Return"² from bondage until these chosen people began to put a spiritual emphasis on the Kingdom of God. ". . . . While the kingdom is described in material terms, and the seat of the government is located at Jerusalem, an effort was being made to transcend purely material categories, and to spiritualize the conception of the city of God."³

This spiritualization which has the appearance of being pressed upon the Jewish thought was not all inclusive, but rather was limited according to Gottschick,⁴ and "was still more or less connected with the idea of a recompense for the fulfilment of the law."⁵ This law expressed the Will of God and in the enactment of that law men were able to appreciate the spiritual values looked for:

There is a world, a sphere of existence, which in the narrower sense is the sphere of God and where in the narrower sense also the Will of God is real and where it is done. Holy men like Elijah, Enoch, Esra, and others, can be transported into it, view it, and preach about it, yet it is above, and quite distinct from, the mundane sphere.⁶

¹Otto, op. cit., p. 35.

²Guignebert, op. cit., p. 131.

³H. M. Hughes, The Kingdom of Heaven (London: The Epworth Press, 1922), p. 29.

⁴J. Gottschick, "Kingdom of God," The New Schoff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co.,), p. 334.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Otto, op. cit., p. 40.

Such a spiritual kingdom came to be recognized as the essential fulfilment of God's higher purpose and then there was transported to this idea the apocalyptic emphasis.

The kingdom of God as visioned by the prophets and, in large measure, by the apocalyptists has as its setting the contemporary social order. Although looking to a 'new heaven and new earth,' it was the same earth radiated by Heaven's blessings, a world purified from wickedness and from evil.¹

Many of the later writings, according to Westcott, conveyed the acceptance of the apocalyptic idea. This literature in part is the Sibylline writings, belonging to the Maccabean period when the national victories were bringing a new hope to Israel,² then the book of Henoch which came at the time of John Hyrcanus;³ this was followed by the Fourth book of Esdras which was composed during the humiliation that fell upon the Jewish people.⁴ The book of Jubilees followed Esdras. All these accepted the apocalyptic emphasis.

But still there is a lack of solidified orthodoxy.

It is true, in the Talmud and the Medrashim, the hope [Messianic] finds a more prominent and detailed expression than any other Jewish belief and dogma, but the conception itself of a Messiah varies so much with individual Rabbis, and the divergence of opinion with regard to its details is so great, that its form remains loose and unlimited.⁵

Perhaps, it is within reason to say that all these

¹ Cohon, op. cit., p. 388.

² Westcott, op. cit., p. 114.

³ Ibid., p. 117.

⁴ Ibid., p. 177.

⁵ Greenstone, op. cit., p. 83.

writings of the later period find their source in the prophets and psalms and add very little to the ideal kingdom.¹ It is said that the "Rabbinic ideas of God's Kingdom combine prophetic with apocalyptic teachings. While conceiving of His reign after earthy patterns (Ber. 58a), the rabbis never lose sight of His transcendence."² It is believed by these rabbis that a repentant nation looking to this God would have as a result the realization or at least a hastening of the ideal kingdom through which Israel would find redemption,³ thus bringing into actuality a better kingdom than the Jews had ever enjoyed.

It certainly does seem evident from the study that has been made that God's kingdom is not a static condition, but an energizing, growing concept. The Old Testament revelation has not brought the Jews out of the first kingdom or realm but has carefully prepared the people for the arrival of the second kingdom or the Messiah. It seems plain that there has been a constant effort on the part of the Old Testament writers to define something of the grace which Jesus brought to the world and in vision at least did point up to the second stage under Christ. "The history of O. T. revelation, therefore, is simply, as said, the history of the developing kingdom of God in its earlier, preparatory, inchoate form, yet from the first a kingdom of grace and

¹Orr, op. cit., p. 848.

²Cohon, op. cit., p. 389.

³Klausner, op. cit., p. 245.

salvation."¹

There is evidence of this general continuity in reference to the kingdom. The slow, incomplete idea resting upon the shoulders of the patriarchs and standing within the Mosaic dispensation has nonetheless the expression of building up to a climax. There is the kingdom of law through which God could institute his favor and finally his glory and resurrection. In order to grasp the import of the Christian kingdom this step through the Jewish kingdom must be understood. Here is ". . . . to be distinguished an onward movement, -- a step to the great goal God always had in view -- the bringing of his own anointed."²

The kingdom of God idea as found in the revelation of the Old Testament, its development into the New Testament, and its promise and hope from beginning to end are but the intent and purpose of God to be the king of his people. From physical entrance to spiritual enjoyment is revealed the ideal perceived by the King of Kings. And the very fact that Judaism was expectantly looking for some intervention, even a miraculous one, indicates that there must follow a transition from the old Jewish kingdom to a new kingdom. This expectation ". . . . reached its highest tension during the cruel dominion of the unscrupulous Roman Procurators, and accordingly the masses gave a ready

¹Orr, op. cit., p. 845.

²Ibid., p. 847.

response to the call of John the Baptist: Repent ye;"1
 Greenstone goes so far as to credit the success that Christ experienced to this one fact of expectancy. The very hope of a new kingdom -- a more powerful kingdom brought under the reign of a Messiah gave Christ and his message its victory.²

Whether we can limit Christ's initial success to this or not, at least it verifies the belief that Judaism expected, through God's development of his kingdom, to see a new era, a new kingdom. They were looking for ". . . . a golden age for Israel and perhaps for mankind, God's kingdom on earth which will last eternally."³

It is primarily important that we sum up the Jewish belief, as far as possible at the time of the coming of the Christ in order to understand the full message he gave. "The reign of God is there, in the Old Testament, the Apocalyptic books, and the Rabbinical literature, a present reality, so far as he is owned and obeyed by individuals and by the people as a whole."⁴

To make some kind of a composite picture of all the thinking and teaching related to the kingdom at this period is necessary in order to sum up the expectancy and draw the screen for the entrance of the gospel writers. It is suggested that the kingdom of God ". . . . was thought of as a

¹Greenstone, op. cit., p. 75.

²Ibid., p. 79.

³Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 776.

⁴Jackson and Lake, op. cit., p. 270.

new order of things on earth suddenly instituted by God, in which only the righteous and the repentant sinners. . . . would survive."¹ The Jews were looking for this. It may be the great disappointment they felt was caused by the simplicity with which God brought his kingdom in the humble manger, although its unexpectedness is evident. The followers of the Maccabaeans during the period of their leadership ". . . . made his kingship a revolutionary principle."² They were constantly praying for its speedy arrival. It was a common topic of prayer. A prayer of the third century which expresses the conception of the realm of God at the beginning of an era is here copied.

'We therefore trust in thee, O Lord our God, that we may soon behold the glory of thy power, to cause the idols to pass away from the earth, and the false gods shall be utterly cut off; to perfect the world in the reign (kingdom) of the Almighty, and all the children of flesh shall call upon thy name; to turn unto thyself all the wicked of the earth. All the inhabitants of the globe shall perceive and know that unto thee every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Before thee, O Lord, our God, they shall bend the knee, and prostrate themselves; and give honor to thy glorious name. They shall take on them the yoke of thy sovereignty (kingdom), and do thou reign (be king) over them soon, for ever and ever. For thine is kingdom, and forever thou wilt reign in glory, as it is written in thy Law, 'The Lord shall reign (be king) for ever and ever.' And it is said, 'And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be one and his name one.'³

We conclude. There is a kingdom of God which is a natural kingdom. In this kingdom are all people, all

¹Moore, op. cit., p. 309.

²Ibid., p. 375.

³Ibid., p. 434.

things, all happenings, all governments of the earth. Now, all have not accepted Him as King of Kings. But the day shall come when He shall be King over all so far as He is owned and obeyed. This obedience must be voluntary action in order to bring that kingdom to men on earth. But in the final analysis his spiritual influence will establish an eternal realm or the kingdom of glory. With this we must look to a study of the Kingdom of Gdd in the gospels for here as Orr says, ". . . . we readily distinguish as successive the patriarchal, the mosaic, the royal, and the prophetic period in the growth of this conception."¹

¹Orr, op. cit.,

CHAPTER II

THE KINGDOM IN THE SYNOPTICS

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It is the main purpose of this present chapter to see the Kingdom drawn on the background that has been sketched concerning the Jewish expectations and hopes of the Messianic age. We are engaged in a study of the Synoptic emphasis of the term βασιλεία. These books are rich in material and stimulate the imagination and encourage an investigation of many contributors who have made a study of this great theme depicted by the earliest students of Christ's Kingdom.

None of the Synoptic writers makes any effort to define or amplify his opinions of the kingdom. We must, therefore, take at face value, with our background material their use of the kingdom or realm of God. It is essential that we group the books in a logical manner and extract what conclusion we can from this grouping. This will not affect the general teaching in any way.

We intend to group Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or the Synoptics into one study and then to give a comparative study of John in a separate chapter showing the causes for his differences. This is logical since the first three are called Synoptics due to their suggesting "in general the same view of our Lord's life, and follow broadly the same narrative

framework, with a similarity in language, vocabulary, and the selection of material, which marks a kinship in which they stand apart from the Fourth Gospel."¹

The Synoptic accounts vary among themselves mainly in the difference of personality of the writer and the destination of the gospel. Matthew uses more of his Jewish background in his attempt to prove Christ to the Jews. Mark on the other hand, relating Peter's experience, is conscious of the Gentile to whom he is addressing his narrative. Luke, addressing the gentile Theophilus, presents the Christian facts of universality of Christ's kingdom and the salvation of all human souls. But, all three are intent upon setting forth Christ and His Kingdom.

Now, the Fourth account will be different. All the various forces that play a major part in this difference will be discussed in the comparative study. In John, the kinship is lost, that kinship which is evident in the Synoptics. Much of it is lost in the battles which are fought over the gospel according to John. What kinship there is we hope to discover.

A brief suggestion as to what the aim of the Synoptics seems to be will give us a place for starting.

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the Wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, the Voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.²

¹A. H. McNeile, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 7.

²Matt. 3: 1-3.

Thus we find the avowed purpose of all the Synoptics. Mark in his gospel intends to proclaim this to the gentiles. Matthew wishes "to show that in spite of the contemporary rupture between Judaism and Christianity, there has been a divine continuity realized in the origin and issues of faith in Jesus as the Christ."¹ Luke, however, "depicts the Messiah as the Saviour of all men and the Satisfier of all human needs, who brings good tidings to the poor, the blind, and the bruised (IV. 18f)."²

The similarity of these books has without question been one of the accepted facts of all scholars, ancient and modern. "In the old Church it was not indeed this agreement that was most wondered at, but the differences that existed along with it."³ Thus, as suggested, the similarity was so great that dissimilarity was a striking novelty.

If their similarity is so apparent we need not labor the point of their aim. They all wanted to show that Christianity was a true consummation of the Jewish idea of the Kingdom of God and the coming of the Messiah in Jesus the Christ. They looked at this revelation from three points of experience. "Matthew emphasizes the Kingdom; Mark, the person of Christ; Luke, the human side;"⁴

¹McNeile, op. cit., p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 15.

³Bernhard Weiss, A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament, trans. A. J. K. Davidson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), vol. II, p. 203.

⁴E. S. Jones, Is the Kingdom of God Realiam? (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1940), p. 55.

In their relationship they all were speaking of the same thing. Thus if we approach this discussion from Jesus' use of the term, irrespective of which account is considered, we can conclude with something of the kingdom mystery made plain.

Did Jesus introduce a "new" idea to the world when he spoke of the kingdom coming and inferred the kingdom present? "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹ Surely, no one would feel that Jesus meant something strange, complex, unknown, and unexperienced. Could he by any reasoning have made this statement in his early ministry and expected any one at all to grasp a revolutionary idea and then be considered as a very trustworthy prophet?

Common sense must tell us that Jesus chose as his starting point the ideas of the world about him, and that on the whole his interpretation of the kingdom was the same as that of his contemporaries. Otherwise, in order to avoid all misunderstanding he would have taken the precaution of giving his own particular definition of it.²

We can feel quite sure that this kingdom expressed by Jesus was the same kingdom or realm which God had led the Jews to consider as "coming." He was not speaking of a dominion of exercised power but that experience or sphere to which the Jews were looking. It is true they did not realize its full import -- but who does today? But above all "the Kingdom he announced was nothing new or strange either, but age-

¹Matt. 4: 17.

²Guignebert, op. cit., p. 328.

old, and known to all Jews of the time as the basic idea of their religion."¹

It is also true, however, he enriched and intended to stir their imaginations to a greater kingdom than that for which they had hoped. He had lost the part that was apocalyptic and also the part that was too earthly. It was his intention to raise their concept at every expression he made of the kingdom. This may be the reason he delighted in using the term Reign of Heaven in contrast to the Kingdom of God which for centuries had found residence in their theology.

For these reasons, he did not explain but used a familiar term. There was no need for him to explain "for his conception is that of the Old Testament scriptures and of Judaism generally, but widened, deepened, enriched with a new spirit and outlook, and set over against the narrow legalism of one school and the bitter fanaticism of the other, among the contending parties whose influence counted for most with the 'people of the land' in Jesus' day."²

Jesus struck a responsive note when he spoke of this kingdom. He spoke their language. Long oppressed, long persecuted, and vainly seeking the freedom of a nation, the hearts of the people were responsive. When the Synoptics record this coming of Christ, "It is difficult not to feel, though centuries intervene, in passing from O.T. to N.T.,

¹Frederick Grant, The Gospel of the Kingdom (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940), p. 134.

²Ibid.

as if the evangelist had taken up his pen precisely where Malachi laid his down."¹ In general Christ's kingdom was familiar as he spoke in his day to his people.

It may be considered that Jesus placed himself in the line of the prophets and thus when announcing the kingdom was speaking as a prophetic voice. Such a declaration; "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the gospel." given in Mark 1: 15, "shows clearly His consciousness of being in the prophetic line, a continuator of the prophetic hope of a divine kingdom."²

As he fits into this prophetic line, we see his similarity of emphasis. He differs only in the extremes to which some prophets went, influenced as they were by history, and as he would point up the final development and revelation of the ideal kingdom. To him, the kingdom became more personal, more an inward experience for its subjects, -- its beginning was much more lowly in that it had lost the monarchical emphasis of David, and it was to begin with him and his disciples.³

His consciousness of the prophetic line revealed, and climaxed in himself might be found in his answer to John the Baptist who had been proclaiming the kingdom. John sent from prison to make inquiry, "Art thou he that

¹Orr, op. cit., p. 848.

²Gilbert, op. cit., p. 736.

³Ibid.

should come, or do we look for another?"¹ The reply of Jesus was to point out the fulfillment of prophecies that John had utilized in his message of the kingdom. "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."² "He was conscious," writes Moffatt, "that His mission was fulfilling the old Isaianic prophecies."³ And not only was this a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy but it was beginning in him. "His reply to John," also, "denotes not the sense that a new era was in course of preparation, but that it was already inaugurated, and it is of this new order that He speaks."⁴

It requires much imagination and extreme elasticity of the gospel writings to conclude other than that Jesus did express a commonly accepted idea. Moreover, any other conclusion credits the common Jews with more religious zeal than ever before evidenced in their history to be able to capture Jesus' meaning so readily and to respond so enthusiastically. Also, to assume he had new and hidden meanings complicates our understanding of the Scribes' and Pharisees' attitude toward Jesus when he threatened to take the kingdom away and give it to another nation. The only conclusion can be that

¹Matt. 11: 3.

²Matt. 11: 5,6. Luke 7:28.

³James Moffatt, Theology of the Gospels (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 51.

⁴Ibid.

they knew whereof he spoke; and not only did they know whereof he spoke, but resented his enriching, expanding, and thus changing of their ideas.

On this premise, that Jesus spoke of the same kingdom, how then may we define this kingdom as the gospels reveal it. We must find his kingdom in the gospels.

Let us revert back to the similarity of the Synoptics, universally accepted. These gospels have a common source, the "Logia." Although "we cannot tell the precise limits of the Logia"¹ we can in this "Logia" find a revelation of Christ's teaching. Gilbert says there is a common element. "If, however, the term Kingdom of God was a favourite one with this editor, [Matthew] we should form our judgment regarding the prominence of the conception in the teaching of Jesus, not from his usage, but from the Logia and the oldest Gospel."²

There is quite a number of passages that indicate a common source which refers directly to the kingdom. Compare as a sampling Mark 1: 14-15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:14-15; Matthew 5: 3, 10; and Luke 6:20; Matthew 11:11 and Luke 7:28; Matthew 12:25; and Mark 3:24; Mark 1:2-7, Matthew 3: 1-6, Luke 3: 3-6; Matthew 3: 7-10, Luke 3: 7-14; Mark 1: 7-8, Matthew 3: 11-12, Luke 9:27, Mark 4: 11, Matthew 13: 11, Luke 8: 10; Mark 4: 26; Mark 4: 30, Matthew 13:31; Mark 9:1,

¹A. T. Robertson, A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ (New York: Harper & Bros., 1922), p. 255.

²Gilbert, op. cit., p. 735.

Matthew 16: 28, Luke 9: 27; Mark 9: 47, Matthew 18: 9; Mark 10: 14, Matthew 19: 14, Luke 18: 16-17,¹ etc. Any comparative study of the gospels will show the numerous related passages: So closely related, they need a common source, either Jesus' words directly or the "Logia" which reports Jesus' words.

It is safe to write that Jesus' idea of the kingdom can be drawn from our record of his words as found in the gospels, for if these writers used as their source the "Logia"² and "it is increasingly admitted that the Logia was very early, before 50 A. D.,"³ we are very close to the personal life of Christ.⁴

We are first of all in this study of the kingdom confronted by one major problem. There seems to be a conflict among scholars about the cataclysmic end and the establishment of the kingdom. Writers such as Schweitzer,⁵ J. Weiss,⁶ and Enslin,⁷ have proposed the eschatological and apocalyptic

¹Robertson, op. cit., p. 31 f.

²Ibid., p. 255.

³Ibid., pp. 255-56.

⁴For a further discussion see McNeile or Streeter.

⁵Albert Schweitzer, The Mystery of the Kingdom of God trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950)

⁶Johannes Weiss, History of Primitive Christianity trans. four friends (ed.) Frederick C. Grant (New York: Wilson -- Erickson, 1937), Vol. I.

⁷Morton Scott Enslin, Christian Beginnings, (3d ed.;) New York: Harper & Bros., 1938).

emphasis in the gospel teachings. Others have denied this theory. Our problem is to discover how both theories can be found in the gospel and either to point up one as the teaching of Jesus or to determine how the two might possibly be coordinated in the emphasis which Jesus was bringing to bear upon the present kingdom. To do so we will pick out some salient features and bring some conclusions.

We must remember that God has been bringing this revelation: "Step by step in the progress of Jewish history, successive features of the coming Saviour were embodied in the law, -- the kingdom, the prophets, the seers;" ¹ Now, we take the final step. John came proclaiming, "the kingdom is here." John was the last of the prophetic voices preceding the advent of the kingdom, "Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold I send my messenger before thy face." ²

There was nothing cataclysmic about its advent. It was here with Jesus. The old ended with John. John is saying to the people "the reign of God" is at hand. It is natural that some confusion exists for "His words would be understood differently by different groups as is always true of popular preachers." ³ It is true that John's message was not fully realized by John. None of the prophets ever envisaged the full

¹Westcott, op. cit., p. 221.

²Mark 1: 2.

³A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper & Bros., 1930), Vol. I, Matt. Mark. pp. 24-25.

import of his message. John but knew that there cometh one after him that was mightier.¹ This one would bring the reign of God as he would "baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire."² Thus John tries to recapture the spiritual emphasis that had been lost in the Maccabaeian ages. Gilbert reports this task of John's when he says, "The idea of the kingdom of God in its spiritual meaning had to be recovered, or more properly discovered, in a worldly, legalistic, Sadducean age. To bring it again . . . was the task of John the Baptist."³

Those leaders of the Jewish kingdom had taken possession to close and not to open. John made a significant contribution in pressing open the kingdom of the spiritual coming of Christ. Jesus pays tribute to John in saying, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."⁴ Then continuing Jesus points out how difficult it had been for John to force open the kingdom and take from the Scribes who had control of the kingdom.⁵ "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by

¹Mark 1: 7. cf. Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16.

²Luke 3: 16.

³Gilbert, op. cit., p. 849.

⁴Matt. 11: 11.

⁵Matt. 11: 12.

force."¹ But now from the time of John, "the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached."²

With the preaching of the "gospel of the kingdom" the emphasis shifts from Judaism to Christianity. It now, under the new kingdom, becomes necessary "to impress men with the importance of recognising the present Sovereignty of God in order that they might live in the Age to Come."³ Jesus himself announced this change at the end of John's ministry. "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel."⁴ Christ calls men to achieve the kingdom, repent, believe, and attain unto the kingdom. "Jesus did transform the Reign of God from something which was eschatological, prepared already, and only to be waited for in an attitude of passivity, into something which developed historically and which was to be achieved;"⁵

The power of his kingdom is brought into play by an acceptance of divine sovereignty of God and is displayed to the present generation by overcoming the evil forces that have had dominion over the world. For he says, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."⁶ Jesus places the kingdom in the present

¹Matt. 11:12.

²Luke 16: 16.

³Jackson and Lake, op. cit., p. 282.

⁴Mark 1:15; Matt. 4:17.

⁵Moffatt, op. cit., p. 57.

⁶Matt. 12: 28.

as he sends out the twelve to accomplish this very thing. "And as you go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons;"¹ This kingdom will not only have a future, but exists here, now, on earth. "It is the active, personal, effective reign of God over human life, displacing the present, active power of Satan, that is announced when His 'Kingship' is said to be 'at hand' or to have 'come upon' that generation."²

This present existence of the kingdom is one of the fundamental teachings of all the gospels. There are many who fail to discover it and when Jesus discusses the "mystery" of the kingdom, he implies its present reality but the blindness of the people to see. Even the disciples were slow to perceive his meaning of the kingdom. The reprimand in Matthew 16: 5-12 is Jesus' admission that even his disciples were slow to grasp his teaching.³ When speaking to a Scribe who questioned him on the commandments of God, "Jesus told him: You are not far from God's kingdom. This word implies that the kingdom is not eschatological but present in the moral and spiritual order,"⁴

¹Matt. 10: 7-8.

²W. Douglas Mackenzie, "Jesus Christ," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, Vol. VII (1915). p. 511.

³Statement: Prof. S. Marion Smith, class lecture, Butler, 1950-51.

⁴Moffatt, op. cit., p. 52.

just as in Matthew 21:31 and 18: 3-4. It is absolutely necessary that the kingdom be present and available for these people to enter.

The Jews had been the kingdom of God. Theirs had been a theocracy. Upon Mount Sinai they had formally acclaimed him King, followed him, obeyed him. Now their rejection of Jesus deprived them of their heritage. Jesus thought of the kingdom as having actually begun in him. "In an important sense it was still future, but it was also present."¹ And, he vainly tries to impress these stiff-necked Jews that if they aspire to keep the kingdom and enter as the harlots and outcasts enter, they must allow the forces of the kingdom to work from within. "In the Synoptic Gospels the kingdom of God is thought of not so much in its ultimate world-wide comprehension as with reference to the crisis which the advent of the kingdom will be for the Jews themselves, and to what is required of those who aspire to a place in it."²

All this is a mystery to the Jews, never has a prophet spoken of such a personal kingdom.³ "Zealots who strained their eyes for signs of a political rising could not recognize the kingdom in unselfishness and purity of

¹Gilbert, op. cit., p. 736.

²Moore, op. cit., p. 374.

³Gilbert, op. cit., p. 736.

heart and the forgiving spirit; where Jesus saw the real and royal presence of the Father they could only see unpatriotic, poor-spirited creatures."¹ This can be said as well of all the leaders of Judaism. This kingdom was hidden from those who looked upon the humble spirit of Christ, crucified him and though forgiven by the dying Saviour, still mocked and persecuted his disciples.

Blessed were those who saw. Blessed, for they were of the kingdom of God. Those who heard and understood, those who saw and comprehended had captured a truth prepared for the hearts of the humble and obedient. This mystery "no doubt means here the very essence of Divine truth: perhaps what the Psalmist means when he says: 'the Lord imparts his secrets to the pious.'"² Jesus dealt with this mystery of the kingdom in parables.

For whether future or present, whether transcendent or immanent -- the chief thing is that the kingdom of heaven is a pure mirum, pure miracle. Mysterion is Christ's term. Not everyone sees this Mysterion. But he who does see -- 'blessed are his eyes.' To open men's eyes to this mysterion is the real objective of the finest parables of the kingdom of heaven.³

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the parable of the sower, which is illustrative of the response to Christ's present kingdom. "Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and it came

¹Moffatt, op. cit., p. 53.

²H. D. A. Major, T. W. Manson, and C. J. Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1938), p. 71. Psalms 25: 14.

³Otto, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side and the birds came and devoured it."¹ Jesus points out here the hard-heartedness of the generation which listens to his proclamation of "the kingdom is at hand."

Then the other three types are a continuation of reactions. "And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth: and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away."² Thus among the many there were those who were anxious to enter the kingdom, ate of Jesus' feeding, listened to his preaching, but at the heat of his testing they withered and cried with the multitude "Crucify him." "And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit."³ Such might have been the case of the rich young ruler. His desire was to be in the kingdom. All his life he had kept the commandments but his riches choked out the growth that had begun.

"And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirty-fold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold."⁴ Those who listened, understood, and did, were in the kingdom of God. "And he

¹Mark 4: 3-4. Matt. 13: 3f. Luke 8: 5f.

²Mark 4: 5-6.

³Mark 4: 7.

⁴Mark 4: 8.

said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."¹ Not everyone sees or hears, but blessed is the man who does comprehend, and comprehending, lives in the realm of the kingdom.

Other parables he gave that they might know the mystery of the kingdom. Mark² and Matthew³ both record the Parable of the Mustard Seed. "And with many such parables spoke he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it: and without a parable spoke he not unto them: but privately to his disciples he expounded all things."⁴ Nothing definite may be found here that will answer all the questions of the kingdom or solve our problems explicitly, for "His thought on the subject, like His thought on Messiahship, was left by Him to be inferred by those who had seeing eyes and understanding hearts."⁵

In the prayer the Lord taught his disciples he leaves much room for conjecture. However, one may find in the prayer a definition of the kingdom: Especially, does the second clause define the request "Thy Kingdom Come."⁶ This petition as taught to his disciples directs their attention to the prophetic hope and calls up the fulfillment to be given through

¹Mark 4: 9.

²Mark 4: 30-32.

³Matthew 13: 31-32.

⁴Mark 4: 33-34. Cf. Psalms 78: 2.

⁵Gilbert, op. cit., p. 736.

⁶Moore, op. cit., p. 309.

the act of God in the submission of man to the divine kingship. Gilbert says: "The petition [Luke 11: 2] is, indeed, a petition for the fulfilment of such OT words as Is 24²³ and Mic 4⁷."¹ If this is true, that Jesus is teaching his disciples to pray for the establishment of the kingdom prophesied about in the Old Testament, then, he can mean nothing but the reign of God in the hearts of men and nations. "The Kingdom of God on earth is therefore the domain in which God's holy will is done in and among men."²

McNeile suggests that the line of separation between Christ's announcement and his reservation is to be found at the point of announcing his Messiahship to Peter after Peter's confession of this Messiahship. He says:

St. Peter's confession of His Messiahship forms an important turning point in His history. Jesus then began to speak of himself as 'the son of man,' and openly to predict His future Messianic glory, His Advent and Judgment.³

However evident this point may make his purpose and kingdom, Jesus had rather broadly hinted at this kingship previously in his reference to a new religion, a new Messiah, in chapter 11, 12, and 13 of Matthew. Even previous to this, in his "sermon"⁴ he had given the "summum bonum"⁵ of the kingdom of

¹Gilbert, op. cit., p. 736.

²George Barker Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 28.

³McNeile, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Matt. 5: 3.

⁵Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 40.

heaven.

In the passages referred to in Matthew 11, 12, and 13, Jesus is warning against an underestimation of the new concept. Jesus says something greater is here than has ever been before. Particularly, in Matthew 11, important in seeing Jesus announce his kingdom. When Jesus answers John he says: "The long awaited rule of God has begun."¹ The rule of Satan was generally accepted by the Jews. The rule of the earth was under the kingdom of Satan and above this was the rule of God who permitted Satan's control until the time of the coming of his kingdom. The casting out of demons shows that Jesus had attacked successfully the rule of Satan. Thus, we can say the rule of God has begun in Jesus' healing, raising the dead, preaching to the poor, and giving release to the captives.²

The whole of Matthew is formed toward the question, "Who is Jesus?" Here it is answered; in Peter's confession it is confirmed. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."³ The kingdom is founded.

What are we to do with the eschatologist point of view? The above gives no consideration to this question. There is, we feel, some answer, at least, for the cause of the extreme eschatologists who say,

¹Statement: Prof. S. Marion Smith, class lecture, Butler, 1950-51.

²Ibid.

³Matt. 16: 16.

. . . . Jesus held the strict apocalyptic view. He expected outward miraculous and portentous physical events as the instruments of the vindication of God. The Son of Man would appear in the clouds, the order of nature would be convulsed, the rulers of the world would be overwhelmed. . . . All this must happen in that generation, might happen any day or hour, though on that point He would not commit Himself to definite prophecy.¹

There seems to be little doubt that Jesus did not hold the apocalyptic outlook of his day. It is not necessary that he should have done so. Jesus was more conscious of God's nearness than others had been and this nearness accounted for what many consider his apocalypses. Rather, as Jesus saw the kingdom begin in himself, and placed in his disciples the power of its continuation, he answered any apocalyptic fantasy. Enslin is rather impatient with such a conclusion as he points out:

The kingdom of God, soon to appear, was the Age to Come, the new age which would suddenly and spectacularly follow the cataclysmic end of the present Age. Attempts to soften or alter his message . . . are utterly superfluous.²

It does not appear to most scholars that we need to soften or alter his message but to understand it.

The mind of God need not be confined within such a small area. As the picture clears, it is obvious that Jesus was thinking in terms of a present kingdom in which he had loyal, faithful subjects endeavoring to teach men the will of God, and that obedience to that will brought men into the

¹Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 511.

²Enslin, op. cit., p. 158.

kingdom. And also, Jesus looked forward to a future rule of eternity in which those blessed would share his inheritance within the presence of God himself. To ignore the simplicity of this revelation and to see only a cataclysmic and perverts the total picture. As Moffatt says: ". . . . we have no use as historical critics or as Christians for an interpretation of Jesus, however brilliant, which will not allow us to hear any notes in His teaching and mission except those of imminent and inevitable catastrophe."¹

Much more realistically Jesus is urging men to prepare for divine fellowship. The whole of the Sermon on the Mount is an emphasis upon the type of character that is found in the kingdom of God. Heretofore, law, ritual and rote were a criterion. The Scribes had taught men to make a record of fulfilling the law and the kingdom was theirs. Jesus emphasizes the need to develop the inward man. The type of person who is in God's kingdom is the "perfect" soul even as the Father is perfect.

Jesus lays down the qualities and characteristics which belong to the kingdom itself, and endeavours to prepare men for it by inducing repentance or a change of heart and life. He is enunciating the laws and principles of the coming reign, when God is to rule as the Father over men, and He shows how even during the present age with its handicaps and hindrances, men may observe these laws and enter into the Spirit of the Father. The future coming of the kingdom will alter many of the conditions of the present order. But it will belong to men just as they are already qualified to receive it; the new righteousness, which is its soil and atmosphere, is implicit

¹Moffatt, op. cit., p. 42.

in the present relations of men to God which Jesus seeks to create and foster.¹

This kingdom of God implies as any ordinary kingdom certain elements. There must be subjects, laws, and extent. God is king, God's people are his subjects, God's laws as revealed to us are the laws of this kingdom and the punishment and rewards are expressed in the after life.

The subjects of the kingdom are by adoption, and that adoption implies certain principles. Not every one shall enter this kingdom as a subject of God, but only those "who do the will of God."²

One final division and some hint has been given of the story of the kingdom. Not only does the kingdom exist here and now but the grand climax of the whole purpose of God is in his eternal existence. The final stage is the kingdom of glory. There is a "coming kingdom" to be inaugurated at the end of the ages. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew depicts the scene as it changes for the final disposal. At the end of the ages "when the Son of Man shall come in his glory"³ the judgment of the world shall separate the righteous from the unrighteous. Those who have developed the character portrayed in all other phases of the kingdom shall enter into the eternal kingdom "prepared from the

¹Moffatt, op. cit., p. 60.

²Matt. 7: 21.

³Matt. 25: 31.

foundation of the world.¹ Those who enter have fulfilled the initial requirements that Jesus announced in his Sermon on the Mount.² "No distinction in meaning of any importance can fairly be established between the two expressions, which denote the kingdom as, on the one hand, God's, and on the other, heavenly in its origin, aims and end."³ They are very closely knit together.

The first kingdom, the Jewish kingdom, was entered by way of flesh, the second kingdom by way of "doing the will of God,"⁴ and the final by having the character, love, and concern for men that epitomizes God himself as he sent his only begotten Son into the world to save it. Jesus put together in the gospel story the fragments of the revelation God had given to ancients and prophets and built out of these fragments the rule of God. "In earlier times patriarchs and kings and prophets foreshadowed in their lives fragments of the work of the Messiah; and so when He came, His work contained implicitly the fulness of that which they pre-figured."⁵

We conclude with the most salient thought that Jesus

¹Matt. 25: 34.

²cf. Matt. 5 f. Matt. 25: 35-41.

³Orr, op. cit., p. 849

⁴Matt. 7: 21.

⁵Westcott, op. cit., p. 221.

proposed concerning the kingdom as he was asked by the Pharisees, "when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or There! for, lo, the kingdom of God is within you.,"¹ that is, in the midst of you even now.

¹Luke 17: 20, 21.

CHAPTER III

THE KINGDOM IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

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The fourth gospel does not by-pass the kingdom of God though one might be brought to this conclusion as the gospel is read seeking passages making direct reference to the kingdom. The only direct reference that John makes to this Synoptic term "*Basileia*" is found in his narrative of Jesus and Nicodemus. One might be prone to conclude that John did not place as much emphasis upon this kingdom as was placed there by the other three records of Christ's ministry and teaching.

Contrary to this John definitely contrasts the kingdom with the world; "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."¹ "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on him, shall have eternal life."² In these and like statements John enunciates the realism of choice.

The revelation of Jesus the Son of God confronts men with a crisis in which a decision is demanded. The response to that demand reveals the origin of the man

¹John 6: 37.

²John 6: 40.

whether he is ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ or ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου¹
 of God or of the world, from above or below.

Or, we might add of the kingdom of God or of the kingdom of Satan. For John's gospel is constantly drawing between the world and God a choice. "The Gospel is the epic of the conflict between light and darkness, with its culminating intensity at the Cross."² This light and darkness are the contrasting lives -- the kingdoms which John saw as the crisis of his time and ours. Howard continues with this contrast by stating: "The epistle carries on the tale as the struggle between the Church and the World,"³ with a final and ultimate victory for the kingdom of God. "Fides Victrix!"⁴

We are directed to many scriptural references to see this general cleavage and struggle between kingdoms. "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."⁵ The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth because I testify of it, that its works are evil."⁶ Jesus recognized that to be a part of the kingdom of God was to be hated by society which identified the Christ by his works.

There are great contrasts to be recognized between

¹W. F. Howard, Christianity According to St. John (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 93.

²Ibid., p. 85.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John 15: 18.

⁶John 7: 7.

the fourth gospel and the Synoptics before we are to see this kingdom in the writings of John. "A broad distinction" which is first pointed out "between the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth is that while the former are compilations the latter is a composition."¹ This author purposed to present a work that would lead to his conclusion -- "That Jesus is the Christ." In doing so he has varied the style enough to cause discussion over the difference.

It has been stated by McNeile that "The Fourth Evangelist is so largely independent that some have doubted he even knew the other Gospels. . . ."² And this independence is especially noted when one investigates the book to throw light on the kingdom of God. John has limited himself to the use of the kingdom "in the Synoptic manner"³ to one lone passage⁴ where he employs the term in full Synoptic terminology. However, the independence and limitation is not generally held to indicate no association or unity of thought between the Fourth and first three Gospels. Rather, it is credited to the difference of atmosphere and outlook of the authors. Weiss, Reynolds, Plummer, McNeile, Lenski, Westcott, and Nollath collectively show how there are many factors

¹McNeile, op. cit., p. 261.

²Ibid., pp. 257-8.

³J. H. Bernard, Gospel of St. John, Vol. II of ICC, ed. A. H. McNeile (2 vols.; New York: Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 102.

⁴John 3: 3.

which played a part in John's different interpretation of the kingdom of God. The omissions which are apparently significant in a comparative study of John and the Synoptics are often "pressed beyond their real significance."¹ To observe that John has not omitted any teaching relative to the kingdom, but has rather given considered thought to it, let us note here what some of the factors are that have colored John's presentation of the gospel.

First, according to Weiss, the gospel of John is directed to the type of person who would not wholly appreciate the emphasis which the Jews placed upon the kingdom. For this gospel, comments Weiss, "was written for Greek-speaking Gentile Christians, as shown by the frequent explanation of Aramaean words and Jewish customs."² Such a simple phrase in John 1:41, known to all Jews he interprets: "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." What would the kingdom mean to gentiles who knew not the Messiah as Christ? Would it have the impact of prophecy to uncover a spiritual realm? "The Gospel according to St. John was said to be the work of a mystic, who, from his own experience and that of a group of Christian disciples influenced by Hellenistic currents of thought, had shed all these obsolete

¹H. R. Reynolds, "Gospel of John," Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 716.

²B. Weiss, op. cit., p. 358.

expectations of the primitive Jewish Christian community¹ Howard goes even further in examining the modern scholar's attitude toward John and his teaching. "Within the last generation," he writes, "attempts have been made to affiliate Johannine ideas to Hellenistic mystery religions, to Mandaean gnosticism, and to the peculiar form of syncretistic Hellenism found in the Hermetic writings."² Whether it goes this deep or not, at least here, according to one scholar, is an indication that John was involved with a people who could understand Greek thought and would be less likely to grasp the Jewish significance of a "kingdom of God."

Second, John's character, says Plummer, influenced his application of Jesus' teaching. "The main features of St. John's character, so far as we can gather them from history and tradition,"³ have without any doubt affected to a great extent "not only his choice of the incidents and discourses selected for narration, but also his mode of narrating them."⁴ H. R. Reynolds admits this subjective element in the fourth gospel but gives less credence to it. "The Fourth Gospel is almost universally admitted to be the work of one thoughtful mind, which has

¹Howard, op. cit., p. 107.

²Ibid., p. 29.

³A. Plummer, The Gospel According to St. John (Cambridge University Press, 1906), p. 49.

⁴Ibid.

impressed itself upon the whole work."¹ But here this critic would suggest that this subjectiveness can be over-exaggerated.²

Directing our attention to the next step in this authorship, Plummer continues, "The circumstances under which S. John wrote will carry us still further. They are very different from those under which the gospels were written."³

Other scholars have recognized this circumstance and as the third factor that contrasts John, we point out the development that had taken place in the church, for it played a very major part in constructing the fourth gospel as it influenced the writer. Manhood had taken over the infant church. "The Synoptic Gospels contain the Gospel of the infant Church; that of St. John the Gospel of its maturity."⁴ In its maturity the church had drawn a line between the world and the membership. There was now a gulf that separated them.⁵ For as Nolloth⁶ says, at least one generation had elapsed between the two sets of writings. This had

¹Reynolds, op. cit., p. 710.

²Ibid., p. 710.

³Plummer, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴Westcott, op. cit., p. 254.

⁵Plummer, op. cit., p. 49.

⁶Charles Frederick Nolloth, The Fourth Evangelist (London: John Murray, Albermarle St., W., 1925), p. 43.

allowed an organizational development.

In this long period and while battle lines were being drawn, the church had discovered it must carefully guard against non-Christian influences and this guard was placed between the Jew and the Church as well as the heathen and the church. The church had become fearful of losing its belief and merging into "a chaos of loose, fantastic ideas;" ¹

And a fourth factor is found in the great change that had taken place among the Jews which could have had great impact upon the writer of this gospel. We must remember the drama of Jerusalem. The visible theocracy had disappeared. The Hebrew nationality had suffered great catastrophe. The rejection of Jesus had brought calamity to the nation of Jews. "To the Evangelist. . . . Israel is the peculiar people of the Logos, for whom salvation is first designed (i. 11; XI. 51 f), and Isaiah saw the glory of the Logos (XII. 41); but already he has before his eyes the historical fact that the Jews as such have rejected salvation and are the real representatives of unbelief and enmity to Jesus." ² Would it appear wise to proclaim Christ's kingdom as a part of the kingdom prophesied by the Jews, with such historical facts to surmount?

¹McNeile, op. cit., p. 260.

²B. Weiss, op. cit., p. 361.

Rather, in his anxiety to show that Jesus was the Son of God and that salvation is in Him, John spoke in terms that are colored by his experience and the impact of history. Other problems faced the church. Newer heresies had displaced the Jewish emphasis. The "beginnings of gnostics and other heresies appeared,"1 and these John found more threatening, more real, and thus they became more obvious in the theological teaching of John.

There is evidence that leads to the conclusion that John spoke in the same tenor as the Synoptics while using phraseology differing from the Synoptics. John has not veered away from the Apostolic traditions and teaching. "Inasmuch as Johannine Christianity is set in the framework of the original apostolic preaching, its Judaic eschatology is in the background of thought throughout."2 But the apparent differences have been aggravated by the contrasts which we have mentioned, thus leading one to deduce that they have nothing in common.

The weight of scholarship is thrown with the contention that John knew the Synoptics and not only knew them but drew heavily upon them as a source while at the same time amplifying and explaining contrasting phases of the

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1942), p. 23.

²Howard, op. cit., p. 32.

Synoptics. Plummer, Reynolds, Bernhard Weiss, Lenski, and Scott are firm in their statements about the Synoptic relationship to the fourth gospel. Reynolds, pointing to the dependence of John upon the three earlier writers states: "The Synoptic narrative, with its most solemn and far-reaching suggestions, has prepared the way for the Fourth Gospel, which everywhere presupposes the existence of the wider and more copious detail." While Plummer is more conservative when he says, "The Fourth Gospel presupposes the other three; the Evangelist assumes that the contents of his predecessors' Gospels are known to his readers."²

Scott and Lenski imply, at least, the essential need for John's account to give to the Synoptics a full understanding and make plain these earlier teachings.

In the discourse, as in the narrative, [Scott says] John draws from the Synoptics; but he uses his sources freely, expanding, compressing, changing the emphasis, restating the actual words to bring out more fully the inward idea. There are few Johannine utterances to which we cannot find some parallel in the other Gospels. The resemblance may not be immediately apparent, and is often little more than a vague echo, but in almost every case the thought is derivable from some authentic saying of Christ preserved in our Synoptics.³

Surely this is force enough to feel safe in stepping into a conclusion that places the four gospels in a harmonious connection which suggests our final conclusion.

¹Reynolds, op. cit., p. 720.

²Plummer, op. cit., p. 46.

³Ernest Findlay Scott, The Fourth Gospel (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), p. 39.

With one more step we reach the conclusion which Lenski favors, namely, that the four gospels are a unit of harmony effected by, credited to John in his fourth account.¹

There is great harmony then in the four accounts as relates to the teaching of Jesus. The three early accounts placed an emphasis upon a biographical account which did not seem to enter the fourth gospel. Rather John's purpose was religious.² This is most obvious at the one place where John refers directly to the kingdom. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."³ This same idea is found in the Synoptics. As Scott says, it "takes us back to the familiar verse, 'Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

In both sayings we have the same essential thought of a new life taking its departure from an entire break from the past. In both, likewise, the image is primarily the same. John has merely developed in its full implication the idea of 'becoming like a child,' and sought to interpret it in line with his own conception.⁴

Here John has made an equation: The kingdom of God is explained as that which men seek most, eternal life.⁵ In the Synoptics the favorite expression has been "kingdom of God."

¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 7.

²McNeile, op. cit., p. 255.

³John 3: 3.

⁴Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 40.

⁵Howard, op. cit., p. 112.

Now, John amplifies, explains, and perhaps to the Greek mind makes clear that this kingdom is his constantly recurring phrase "life" or "eternal life." For the Synoptic writers the gift of God bestowed on the sons of men was the blessed kingdom foretold and now present. For John, the broader understanding is God's gift through Jesus Christ who brought eternal life while entrance into it was the same as the kingdom entrance.

In the Synoptic teaching of Jesus, entrance into the kingdom of God requires conversion, that is, becoming as little children. . . . John avails himself of a vocabulary which was well understood in a world of Hellenism. The doctrine is set forth boldly in the prologue. 'To as many as received 'the Logos, 'he gave the right to become children of God, even to those that believe on his name, who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' The same¹ theme is expanded in the conversation with Nicodemus.

The Messianic hope is not lost, then, nor has the kingdom become obsolete to John, but rather he has supplanted the ideas. For "In the Fourth Gospel the Messianic idea is replaced by that of the Logos. The proclamation of the kingdom becomes the message of 'eternal life.'"²

This analysis is not universally accepted in spite of the great number of scholars who favor it. Foakes Jackson finds no similar passages in the Synoptics for this rebirth or new creature spoken of in John III.³ But this independence

¹Howard, op. cit., p. 94.

²Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 6.

³Jackson and Lake, op. cit., p. 326.

which is claimed for John and the difference with the Synoptics is found in his salvation, eternal life, or redemption which is made synonymous to the kingdom. "To accept the kingdom is to accept redemption."¹ Many who write on the Johannine concept draw this close comparison. "In grasping the Johan. ideal of salvation, Beyschlag finds the same thoughts as in the Synop. teaching concerning 'the kingdom' which phrase, when he finds it in Ch. 3, he regards as the simple equivalent of 'the Life' and 'the eternal life' given by the great Teacher. . . ."²

It hardly seems necessary to labor the problem further. With few exceptions, salvation, life, eternal life as found in John are the full explanation of the gospel idea of the kingdom of God written mainly in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This fact is testified to in a rather ironical manner as those who crucified him placed over his head a sign reading: "This is the King of the Jews." Thus in harmony with Matthew, Jesus is King of Israel, King of the Jews. This Kingship he claimed. But as in John 18: 36, he distinguishes his kingdom.

He took on Himself the Messianic task of inaugurating that Kingdom of God which had been dimly prefigured in the ancient theocracy. In the mind of Jesus, however, the purely national significance of the title of 'Messiah' was far transcended. The kingdom of God as he conceived it was a

¹Jones, op. cit., p. 56.

²Reynolds, op. cit., p. 725.

spiritual magnitude, and the name by which He expressed His relation to it assumed, therefore, an entirely new value. As the Christ He was the representative of a new moral order which had nothing to do with racial and political divisions. He had come to fulfil the theocratic ideal, not by restoring the kingdom to Israel, but by revealing the Will of God and bringing all men into obedience to it. This contradiction between His own sense of the Messianic calling and the traditional conception, explains His reluctance to proclaim Himself as the Christ. He was conscious of the inadequacy of this title, which was yet imposed upon Him by the historical condition under which He appeared. Before He finally adopted it He sought to transform its meaning, at least in the minds of His disciples. In the light of His own life and message they were taught to associate it with a new order of ideas -- ethical and religious instead of political and national.¹

In no sense is his kingdom a worldly kingdom with designs upon the power of Rome. But rather his is a spiritual ideal and concept always directed toward the supreme rulership of God. "The Kingdom is over the man himself, not over his accidents and circumstances."²

Thus we feel that John, though he apparently does not enunciate the kingdom in words, has captured more significantly the real kingdom. Thus he brings to bear upon the reader more of the meaning which Jesus pressed into his words and works as he proclaimed the "kingdom is at hand," it is in your midst, in your heart.

The ideas of the Messiah and the kingdom meant infinitely more to the mind of Jesus than the names themselves could be made to signify. He was continually

¹Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 178.

²Frederick Denison Maurice, Gospel of St. John, new edition (London: Macmillan & Co., 1867), p. 90.

hampered by the inadequacy of the names, which as a Jewish teacher he was nevertheless constrained to use.¹

We can fairly see how some scholars feel John has expanded, filled out, completed, and enriched the Synoptic expressions. In his period he broke free from Judaism since there was a definite separation of Jews and Christians at this period. "Obviously, it was the purpose of the Fourth Evangelist to record the impressive words, gestures, revelations by which the Lord unveiled both himself and the Father."² And he was not too restricted by traditions. He "is concerned to make explicit what is implicit in the earlier writings and to bring out the theological significance and eternal truth of the incidents he is recording."³ If you want to understand the kingdom of God as written in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, then, says Maurice, you will find a commentary on these passages in the book of John and especially amplified in the John 3: 1-12 passage.⁴

John portrays a kingdom on earth. This kingdom which he enunciates is, as well as the Synoptic kingdom, a yielding of the will to the rulership of God epitomized in Christ Jesus. This kingdom on earth consists of the "multitude who are 'of

¹Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 7.

²Reynolds, op. cit., p. 714.

³R. V. G. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), p. 53.

⁴Maurice, op. cit., p. 88.

the truth' and 'hear his voice,' who come to the light and yield to his control. . . ."¹ What better explanation of this process can be found than in the discourse of Nicodemus. Here John allows a direct equation to explain the question of eternal life. "'Eternal Life' is the desire of all mankind; and the spiritual movement which is requisite if the desire is to be satisfied is an act of faith in Jesus as the Son of God."² This is the message of the Synoptics. It is also the message of the Johannian kingdom.

When, therefore, our Lord tells Nicodemus that only those who were born again, can see the kingdom of God, He tells him that the vision of the true state of men, -- of that order which is intended for men, -- is only given to those who receive the Light which lighteneth all men. Theirs is the nobler, better birth -- the divine birth; and theirs is the power of perceiving that kingdom which surrounds all men, to which all are subject, but which, being the kingdom of God, and not the kingdom of the Caesar, does not act upon men through material armies, and tax-gatherers at the receipt of custom, -- does not manifest its power and majesty to the outward eye.³

This is Jesus' expression in Matthew concerning the mystery of the kingdom. Some have eyes to see but do not see the kingdom, some have ears to hear but do not comprehend. No one can become a citizen until seeing, he sees, hearing, he hears and understands.⁴ There is essentially a change,

¹Reynolds, op. cit., p. 727.

²Bernard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. CIXVI.

³Maurice, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

⁴Statement: Prof. S. Marion Smith, Class lecture, Butler, 1950-51.

a "turning away from material things, and approaching God with the simplicity and single-heartedness of a little child"¹ This is the peak of Jesus' teaching as John sees it. Altogether he means God's rule over life brings eternal life. "That is the summum bonum in John."²

The king himself finds the major place in John's thinking. There was no lack of concern on the part of the three biographical accounts of Jesus but somehow their "burden. . . . is 'the kingdom of God, '"³ while this Evangelist turns all eyes to him who rules the kingdom. John turns the eyes to the "Son of Man" for he has in his power the kingdom and through that power he controls "the indispensable conditions and executes the initial stages of this everlasting life."⁴ The entrance into this rule or realm of God must be a spiritual one "of which the outward rite of baptism is only the seal and symbol."⁵

However it may be placed in our thinking this is God's design for setting aside the loyal subjects who in the present administration have the kingdom of God as a reality. The kingdom is not altogether a future event for men but a present crisis demanding decision. "It is true,

¹Bernard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. CIXII.

²Gilbert, "Kingdom of God," Dictionary of Christ, p. 934.

³Nolloth, op. cit., p. 140.

⁴Reynolds, op. cit., p. 725.

⁵Scott, The Fourth Gospel, p. 129.

as Volz points out, that the reign of God was considered to have not only a prospect of future manifestation but already a number of loyal subjects on earth. . . ."¹

These subjects have seen the inauguration of his rule here.

"Life" as John displays it has a present meaning.

The powers of the age to come are already on the ground as an army of occupation. . . . 'the signs' in the Fourth Gospel tell their tale of the same powers in the hands of Jesus. . . . 'Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.' In each case the present victory sounds the death-knell of diabolic pretension. The decisive battle has been won, but the warfare is not yet accomplished.²

But John assures us the kingdom of God has been established.

The Son of man leads his array as the Messiah. As Christ was victorious so shall his kingdom prevail.³

Howard has summed up the Fourth Evangelist's message in a way that befits the spirit in which it was written.

"Its teaching is the most highly developed in the New Testament, but behind all the theological interpretation we can discern the outline of the Apostolic preaching, and beneath the whole structure of faith we can trace the foundations of the evangelic history of Jesus of Nazareth."⁴ Here is transfigured the hope of Israel, the song of ages, the King of Kings, in agony upon a cross, establishing a kingdom by his

¹Moffatt, op. cit., p. 51.

²Howard, op. cit., p. 117.

³cf. John 20: 31.

⁴Howard, op. cit., p. 18.

dying and in that dying he states he can draw all men unto himself for all eternity.¹ The kingdom of God is found in John's Gospel.

In St. John's Gospel, Salvation is Life, Light in its essence, and Truth and Love in methods, instrument or form. But the very idea of salvation, which was appreciated, to begin with, by John the Baptist (12⁹) and by the Samaritans (Jn 4⁴², Jn 4¹⁴), implies from OT times the great need of men and the greatest work of God. It denotes the rectification or reinstitution of all the relations which had been shattered by sin, -- all that is elsewhere covered by such Pauline phrases as pardon, justification, sanctification, adoption, -- all such divine experiences as faith, hope, love, life eternal, -- in fine all the work wrought for us by the Christ, the Son of God, -- all the internal transformation which is effected in us, in the fabric of our being, by the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.²

Truly this is the Kingdom: All nations, all people. He will become the shepherd of a new flock: The king for a new kingdom. He will stride across the racial lines that Judaism has set up for its kingdom. He has become the "Son of Man."

For him [Jesus] it connoted all that 'Messiah' meant and more, for it did not narrow his mission to men of one race only. It represented him as the future Judge of men, and as their present Deliverer, whose Kingdom must be established through suffering, and whose gift of life was only to become available through his death.³

¹cf. John 12: 32.

²Reynolds, op. cit., p. 725.

³Howard, op. cit., pp. 111-12.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH'S RELATION TO THE KINGDOM

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The Kingdom and the Church: Are they related?

To make a satisfactory and thorough reply to this query of the Church and Kingdom of God we would need to break the limitations under which we have placed this study by its very title, "The Kingdom of God in the Gospels."

There are two, and only two references in the gospels, to which we can turn and have a direct statement of the Church. This, without dispute, places great limitations on what can be written. If, however, we keep the later developments in mind we have an abundance of related material. The Book of Acts and the following epistles will assist us even if silently.

There are scholars who help much to extricate us from this dilemma such as Scott who with one stroke opens a vast field as he writes, "In the New Testament there is no identification of the Kingdom and the Church, but it was assumed, almost from the first, that they were somehow bound together."¹ Then he adds this statement later to enlarge further our possibilities: "In the Fourth Gospel, although

¹Scott, The Kingdom of God in the New Testament, p. 167.

the Church is never actually mentioned, the idea of it becomes central."¹ We feel that this was the consensus of the chapter on the "Fourth Gospel" just studied. These two statements being true, we have nothing further to prove. We will, then, attempt to discover whether it is generally true that the Kingdom of God and the Church have a close relationship, if not identical.

We begin with the sixteenth chapter of Matthew.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."² The related passage that follows seems to give us the secret of the Master's teaching on these two terms. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."³ Here, as though he might be using interchangeably these terms Jesus answers our inquiry. Allen in his commentary on the verses grasps this easy solution. "There is no difficulty at all in supposing that Christ used some Aramaic phrase or word [16:16] which would signify the community or society of His disciples, knit together by their belief in His divine Sonship, and pledged to the work of propagating

¹Scott, The Kingdom of God in the New Testament, p. 168.

²Matt. 16: 18.

³Matt. 16: 19.

His teaching."¹ The Church then would appear the Kingdom or at least an instrument of it.

Then Robinson injects a conclusion that disposes of the entire passage as well as the later one in Matthew 18: 17. There are only these two passages in the gospels in which the term "Church" appears. "It is suggested that the whole section is possibly to be attributed to the experience of later Christians."² If this be true, we are left without benefit of the smallest scrap of direct scriptural reference to the Church and Kingdom's relation. Robinson does not here state that they cannot be identical but if he destroys this passage there are scholars who will take the next step. Oman says, "Jesus did not, with the Catholic theologians identify the Kingdom of God with the Church, or with modern theologians since Schleiermacher, with the progressive amelioration of humanity."³ Others go along with this belief and it is this difference that sets up our major problem. Fairbairn draws a line between the two: "It is an error of the first magnitude to confound the churches with the kingdom; they are not distinct aspects of the same idea but as different from

¹Willoughby C. Allen, "Gospel According to S. Matthew," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 176.

²Theodore H. Robinson, The Gospel of Matthew (New York: Harper & Bros., 1927), p. 141.

³John Oman, "Church," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, Vol. III (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 619.

each other as means are from ends."¹

On the other side of the question are men as enthusiastic for the identification. Still considering the passage in Matthew 16, Jackson and Lake make a very decided statement to this effect. "The identification of the Church with the Kingdom of Heaven is unmistakable in Matt. XVI. 19, because the keys of the Kingdom are represented as effective both in heaven and on earth."² At least, they feel confident that the editor of Matthew has so concluded. "It is therefore tolerably certain that some Christians, possibly in Antioch, thought of the Kingdom of God as the Church."³ They amplify this conclusion by pointing out that Luke contains no such view.⁴

Scott, from whom we quoted first, agrees with Jackson and Lake in this contention of affinity between the two and even finds in these Lukan writings confirmation of the position where Jackson and Lake hesitate.

But the truth is that the church was bound up inseparably with Jesus' own work, and cannot otherwise be understood. This was recognized by Luke when he planned a history which should consist of two parts, integrally united. The first would tell of Jesus'

¹A. M. Fairbairn, Studies in Religion and Theology (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1910), p. 134.

²Jackson and Lake, op. cit., p. 330.

³Ibid., p. 331.

⁴Ibid.

life on earth; the second would describe the rise and expansion of his church.¹

It is very difficult to say that one conclusion has stronger support than the other. It seems to be a very divided issue. Gayford, Vincent, Maude, Bruce, and Gottschick make a contribution but none gives enough majority or emphasis to clear the issue. It is necessary to approach the matter from an entirely different view to arrive at a harmonious and satisfactory conclusion.

The Church does have a place in the study of the Kingdom. Upon this contention they all are agreed. It is from this agreement that our relation can be drawn. We would point out then what the scholars think is the relationship and give a summarization of the general characteristics.

First, there is evidence from many men that the kingdom was thought of in terms of a future experience. Enslin proposes that Jesus himself lost some of the hope "as the weeks went by and as he saw the initial enthusiasm giving way first to apathy, then to bitter opposition, he became quickly disillusioned;"² It would be not unusual to suppose that some of his followers in the centuries of the earliest church should begin to lose of the "present" hope. "Not only has the thought of the eternal Messianic kingdom passed absolutely from the minds of men, but even

¹Ernest Findlay Scott, The Nature of the Early Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 11.

²Enslin, op. cit., p. 158.

his hope of a temporary Messianic kingdom is abandoned by many apocalyptic writers.¹

Events which occurred gave the Christians a deeper insight into the coming of the kingdom. It lost its flavor of temporal victory. That golden age which Israel anticipated was sublimated in the hope for life eternal. They began to read into the prophecies a new hope. ". . . the trend of events led early Christianity to make a decided disavowal of all political expectations antagonistic to Rome, the conception of the Kingdom of God was made an entirely spiritual one, and was identified with the 'Olam ha - ba' (= 'the world to come')," ² Such a transition was bound to affect their understanding of the kingdom.

From this developed the fuller meaning of the Church and in the Church can be seen the impact of the Kingdom. Here most of all the scholars find some similarity of thought. "Thus," says Oman, "the Kingdom of God was something which needed to be prepared for, yet could not be accomplished by any preparation; something present now, yet in the end a regeneration solely by the finger of God" ³ The Church could evolve out of this idea.

It rests, continues Oman, on the conviction that the true Divine order is ever ready to break into the world, if men will only suffer it to break into their hearts.

¹Charles, op. cit., p. 62.

²Kohler, op. cit., p. 503.

³Oman, op. cit., p. 619.

It is the society of those who already realize the blessings of this Kingdom of God in their hearts -- pardon, grace, joy --¹

A great amount of contradiction seems to be removed and some harmony evolves as we approach the Church from this standard. The Kingdom becomes larger and the Church more important to the Kingdom of God. Gottschick brings them together when he writes, "In so far as both are regarded as the working of God, the church and the kingdom of God coincide; they are both the sum total of persons who have been transferred by the Gospel of Christ into the life of an ethically active faith, independently of any legal organization."²

If we examine the findings of some of those who have made a study of this relationship, three very fascinating suggestions emerge. The Church becomes either a manifestation of the Kingdom, a medium by which it is realized or the means by which the will of God is expressed or revealed in the world of flesh. These three suggestions are as follows:

The men and women who constitute the Church in our world have united to manifest the kingdom of God and as such possess all that the kingdom can bestow. Oman says:

The word [church] was not first applied to the local communities and then extended to embrace the whole, but stood for the NT Israel, and was meant to assert that

¹Oman, op. cit., p. 619.

²Gottschick, op. cit., p. 339.

the essence of the whole was in every part. Wherever two or three were gathered together, there the Church was in all its power and dignity, in all the promise of the Kingdom of God, and in possession of the blessings of that Kingdom.¹

The Church is a segment of the Kingdom of God. It manifests all that the Kingdom can mean, all the Christ taught, all that he hoped to develop.

It had its origin in Jesus' message of the Kingdom and is nothing else than the brotherhood of those who live for the Kingdom. In the midst of the earthly order it stands for a higher one, in which all present values are reversed.²

Can anything be more evident than that Jesus intended the Church to be a manifestation: That the Church should show the real conception of life in the kingdom?

Jesus founded His Church for the precise purpose of living under the conception that life is not good in itself, but good only when we overcome it through faith in a rule which God himself will introduce. In short, He founded it as the society of the Kingdom of God.³

When the Church is vitally aware of its responsibility, when it fulfills its task "The ultimate will reveal a redeemed humanity manifesting itself as the Church"⁴ and God will have the kingdoms of the world as his kingdom. The Church then as Scott sums it up is "In the last resort nothing but the message of Jesus, expressed in concrete form."⁵

¹Oman, op. cit., p. 618.

²Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, p. 237.

³Oman, op. cit., p. 619.

⁴Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), Vol. I, p. 311.

⁵Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, p. 32.

And in this form Jesus' message finds manifestation.

Second, we find an expression that the Church is the medium by which the Kingdom is to be known or realized. Brown in a very distinct statement categorizes it thus: "The Church is the divinely appointed means by which the kingdom of God is to be realized among men."¹ It becomes the instrument of God through which men are bound together and the rule of God is made known and can be identified. It does not necessarily follow that the two are synonymous, but the "Church was the community of the Kingdom,"² As has been rightly said, "'The Church,' whatever view we take of it, is only a collection of persons. The kingdom of heaven includes persons and things."³ The Church is not as extensive an idea as the idea discovered in the kingdom. The Kingdom can and does exist aside from the Church. ". . . . it may at least be said that His Kingdom is visibly represented in His Church, and that 'The church is the Kingdom of Heaven in so far as it has already come, and it prepares for the Kingdom as it is to come in glory.'"⁴

It might be most difficult to identify the Kingdom

¹William Adams Brown, Christian Theology In Outline (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 57.

²Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, pp. 19-20.

³A. Lukyn Williams, St. Matthew, Vol. I of The Pulpit Commentary, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (50 vols.; London: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1892), p. XXV.

⁴J. H. Maude, "Church," Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, ed. James Hastings, Vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 325.

of God; it would certainly be difficult to find a practical way to advance the ideals of the kingdom without some organized effort. The Church is then the "kingdom realized on earth"¹ which brings us to the third fascinating suggestion.

The Church has been suggested as the fulfiller of God's will on earth.

Above all, it [Church] accepted with a perfect confidence the promise of Jesus that the Kingdom of God would presently set in. This is the central theme of the Gospels. They tell how Jesus had proclaimed the Kingdom, how he had called on men to live for it, how he had suffered as the Messiah who was to bring it in.²

Man was given a definite and weighty responsibility. Upon him depended the expression of God's will. The Church was composed of those who had been transformed here and from that transformation "The church has the special duty of worship, acknowledgment, and education; the kingdom of God that of the organization of humanity through love."³

It is so only insofar as the Church, then, can truly be known as the institution that does this work with an exactness for the will of God that this identity is recognized. Vincent in his Word Studies draws our attention to this exactness.

The kingdom of God in its present development is not identical with the Church. It is a larger movement which includes the Church. The Church is identified

¹Alexander Balmain Bruce, The Synoptic Gospels, Vol. I of The Expositors Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoli (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Co.), p. 225.

²Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, p. 9.

³Gottschick, op. cit., p. 339.

with the kingdom to the degree in which it is under the power of the spirit of Christ.¹

Under the power of the spirit of Christ the Church can be identified as the expression of God's will for his Kingdom.

When we analyze the studies of the various scholars such as Vincent, Scott, Bruce, Maude, Oman, Gottschick as we have done in these preceding paragraphs, it is evident that the major portions have found the Church and Kingdom related: That the Church as a manifestation, medium or fulfillment of the Kingdom of God can all be classed together as a significant work closely related to Christ's teaching concerning the kingdom. Scott says, "It can hardly be emphasized too much that between the work of Jesus and the Church that arose afterwards there was an intimate relation."² In no other manner does the church have significance. It is not necessary to place the word "church" in the gospel accounts. As a matter of record, Maude claims

The historical society known as the Church has never claimed to have come into complete existence until the day of Pentecost, and its growth and organization were a gradual process. We shall not, therefore, on any theory, expect to find in the Gospels a complete and explicit account of the foundation and characteristics of the Church,³

From the foregoing we can conclude that the Church

¹Vincent, op. cit., p. 311.

²Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, p. 10.

³Maude, op. cit., p. 324.

is in a very close manner related to the kingdom. However, it must not be identified as identical since the Kingdom is a larger idea than the local group known as the Church. To a great extent the Church is the present experience, the Kingdom a larger, fuller and more anticipating expectancy. Gayford sums it up thus:

It [the Church] is properly a collective noun, denoting the people of God. Even when it is spoken of ideally or as a person, the fundamental meaning is still that of God's folk. The 'kingdom of God' is then a very much wider conception than the 'church' when the two occur side by side (Mt 16¹⁸), the 'kingdom' appears as the future and heavenly counterpart of the church.¹

Any survey of the gospels shows that this understanding does not do violence to the interpretation of the kingdom of God. "My kingdom is not of this world"² came to take on new emphasis and understanding. ". . . . Daniel's visions of a future Kingdom of God inspired the hopes of the early Christians."³ For here in the Church and the Kingdom they found strength for the present crisis, fellowship and knowledge, and in the kingdom a hope for the future. "Both present and future are contained in the conception of the Kingdom as a seed that develops and matures for the time of harvest. . . ."⁴

¹S. C. Gayford, "Church," A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), p. 426.

²John 18: 36.

³Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 776.

⁴Gilbert, op. cit., p. 736.

The Church caught the convictions that Jesus gave and in a very solid and determined manner conveyed their convictions and still carries them clearly as the hope of mankind for today and tomorrow.

To all appearance it is a society like others, made up for the most part of very ordinary men and women: 'Few who are noble or wise or mighty have been called.' But they have identified themselves with the Kingdom of God. Living in the present world their true affinities are with a world that lies beyond.¹

This is the answer to the question, "Is the Church related to the Kingdom?", a very close and inseparable relationship.

¹Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, p. 156.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The consideration that we have given to the study of this Kingdom has brought forth an abundance of material and as well a rather concrete form in which to place the idea that the Gospel writers have intended to construct. We certainly have not given too much emphasis to this subject in the light of the vast accumulation of books and articles that have been written on this subject after very mature study.

Jesus placed a very important emphasis upon the kingdom for in the idea there was to be found all that God had planned from the beginning of time for the redemption of His people. It has been clearly shown that each stage or step of the plan revealed through the patriarch, priest, king and Christ led to the establishing of the will of Almighty God in the hearts of men who would have Him rule over them. Each phase of the study brought more evidence that there was harmony in man's feeble attempts to understand and express the ideal kingdom which God was constantly urging His people to anticipate and to preach to the whole world.

This "understanding" was slow and was the one feature

that gave to the development of God's ideal kingdom the appearance of being a progressive revelation. Man first had to see the kingdom as "law." Through this "law" God developed the mind and heart of man to the point of more fully appreciating what was His original and intended purpose. "So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."¹ When this "understanding" is universal the end of God's way will be attained and the final appearance of God's kingdom will be known.

This study has covered in part all the important fields through which the kingdom was seen to struggle to reach the hour of Christ's claim "the kingdom of God is at hand." For a comprehensive view we saw the kingdom as realized by the people of the Old Testament including the patriarchs, the Mosaic era, the prophetic and monarchical. It is very difficult to grasp the intentions of Christ aside from an understanding of what was revealed in the Old Testament. This very fact is what gave John in his Gospel account a distinct coloring that is sometimes misunderstood. In order to bring the life and religion of Jesus to non-Jews he attempts to capture the minds of men aside from the Old Testament kingdom teaching and background. To see and know what was in the Jewish experience facilitates

¹Gal. 3: 24.

the study of the "Gospel kingdom."

Very little has been said of that period which intervenes between the Old and New Testaments. The growth of the Jewish idea had made no large strides but was only modified to a small degree by the influences that were brought to bear by the wars and struggles of this people. It is possible to see the road of travel from the beginning to the end of the Jewish dispensation and to realize that the Christian thought has come out of the message that rested in and upon the first people of God.

God chose His people well. In the creation story he gave the beginning. He formalized it upon Mount Sinai and through adversity and prosperity which His people suffered and enjoyed He carefully tended and administered His Will. Aside from the direct revelations to his chosen prophets, priests and kings he was able to utilize heathen influences to mold and form the final spiritual perfection.

Into the life of the chosen people came many strange religious beliefs which might have modified to some extent the concepts that the Jews felt were orthodox. They met the Assyrian powers, the Babylonian kingdom, the Greek world, and the Roman governors. These nations played a part in the construction of the Jewish beliefs. Not these alone but every foreign religion that met and struggled with the Judaism of Old Testament history left a brand mark upon their body

which could not be eradicated. Egypt, the Phoenicians and all countries with which the Jewish life came in contact, either in battle or commerce, directed them to a better comprehension of the coming Messiah.

When Christ came there was no great and unanimous harmony among all minds as to what all Jews everywhere expected. However, there was running through, above and under the general thought a fundamental hope and expectancy. It was this common hope and anticipation that made it possible for Christ to present the story of the kingdom of God. He painted His picture on the backdrop that all Jews had drawn in their minds and which was a national and universal outlook.

As a matter of actual fact there had to be an orthodox belief, in part, at least, to make effective any concentrated teaching to reach the minds of this people. John found men most willing to listen. Many came out to John to hear about this kingdom. The orthodoxy had reached its highest peak in hope.

In Jesus there was lost the cataclysmic expectancy which had attached itself to the kingdom during the preceding centuries. With Jesus it came quietly. There was a recapturing of the spiritual emphasis. John foresaw this and laid the event to one who would follow after him. The struggle between the old and the new was the only cataclysmic relation

that was carried over from the old. "The time is fulfilled believe in the gospel."¹ Here is displayed the power of God to bring His Kingdom. And in the powers Jesus displayed there was the verification of the true revelation of God. He came casting out demons, healing the sick, restoring strength to useless limbs, sight to blind, and even giving life to the dead. With these manifestations Jesus displayed that Satan had been put down and that the rule of God had started in actuality.

The reality of its existence depended upon the manner of reception. The many parables that Jesus gave indicate the various attitudes of the people then as well as through the present hour of history. Where Jesus is accepted, where God is enthroned in the heart of a man or a nation, then as real as can be the "kingdom has come."

This analysis was all foreshadowed in the approach to the New Testament time. Nothing radical was brought in. A Jew well versed in the traditions of his people could see readily enough that God had fulfilled his promise to His people. It was only in consideration for those who had not this background that John came along with a new approach to the kingdom. He saw the Greek mind lost in the maze of Jewish history and tradition about the kingdom and explained God's will in a new light.

"Eternal life" and "life" become the strain by which

¹Mark 1: 15.

John recites to a new mind and philosophy the things concerning the kingdom. Whereas the first three books of the canon had approached the subject with the contrast between the kingdom of God and the worldly, that is, the one would be on the right hand the other placed on the left; one would see God eternally, the other would be cast into outer darkness; now John makes it a contrast between Life and Death. This gospel according to John sees the conflict between light and darkness, life and death as is appropriate for the Asiatic mind.

There were other influences given consideration in this paper along with the difference of people and philosophies, but we are concerned to understand that John did announce the kingdom as well as the other writers of the Gospel accounts. There is great harmony in the four accounts. If anything, John has amplified the teachings of the former. At least he has captured the teaching of the others in his work to the point of claiming that those who would see God must submit to Him and His rule. It has been said that if you would understand fully what the Synoptics teach you read John as a commentary upon these men. He does in a very fine manner supplement the earlier studies.

It can be seen how God continues to bring to the minds of men of all nations the concept of the kingdom. Through the experiences of the Old Testament it was seen

how He did develop, work and enlarge the idea through Jew and pagan. Now even after Christ has been revealed and redemption is revealed for all the world, God continues to use various approaches to make it possible for man to comprehend and be saved.

The kingdom of God has been realized through Jesus Christ. This all the gospel accounts testify. The gospel story is the story of God's power manifested. Satan has been put down. Jesus died, he was buried, and his soul went to Hades for the great conflict. At the dawn of the third day the grand question was answered. He did overcome death, hell and the grave. In the power of His resurrection God has assured all generations that His Kingdom is here. He also has assured the world that a time has been set for righteous judgment and an evaluation of the life which has been spent. He is now the Judge and King of His Kingdom. Submission to Him is man's only hope; the hope for which the nation of Jews looked so long and which they ignored when the angels sang on the hillside, and the power of God brought Him to life again. For the present generation the same essential attitude is required for the "King of Kings" to become real and to lead men to know Him as "Lord of Lords."

God in His plan found it necessary to establish some medium or messenger for the story of the kingdom. In the Old Testament it was the Jews' kingdom. This brings us into

the study of the church of Christ. Fellowship, education, and evangelization are essentials of God's Kingdom. The church became the instrument by which the goal was secured. The final conclusion of this paper is that Christ established His church as an essential segment of the kingdom. The kingdom is the large overall realm in which God has authority, the church is that segment in which people have found fellowship because of their separation from the world at large and have found citizenship above, or in God.

The church is to be identified with the kingdom in so far as the church does the will of God, has Him to rule over it, and is directed in all its relations by the Spirit which God sent into the world. It began on Pentecost and thus must and can not be identical with the kingdom which, Jesus said before His death, is at hand.

The progression of God's kingdom has reached the final stage. It traveled through the patriarchal, the Mosaic, the monarchical, the prophetic and now into the realm of the church which has brought the spiritual emphasis that was intended from the beginning of time. God has left nothing undone that could be done that men might turn and be saved. As His Son expired on the cross it was His words which convey the final stage of God's work. "It is finished." Through the ages of time God has brought His creation successfully to the point of revealing His final will. This whole was given for men as the Gospel of John which says 20: 31, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."

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