



For the Lover of God
A DEEP DIVE INTO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

WEEK 8

CLASS BY PASTOR GLYN NORMAN

KINGDOM OF GOD

Reading Assignment done:

Reading: Luke 8:10; 11:17-18; 13:18; 18:16-17, 25; 22:16,18
 Caragounis, 'Kingdom of God/Heaven' in *DJG*, 417-30

What do these verses tell us about the nature of the kingdom?

Luke 16:16 about John/since then force

Luke 13 parables

Luke 17:21 not here or there - within you

Luke 12:32 (and 6:20; 22:29) kingdom conferred on 'you'

Luke 9:27 not taste death till

1. It is a Gospel phenomenon

of 149 refs, there are 26 total in the other NT books put together (c. 8 in Acts)

- Lk has 1/3 of refs in the NT to KG, 49 of 149
- Mt also has 1/3 (k of heaven); in each case (Mt and Lk), they have more unique refs than shared ones
- Doesn't appear in the OT, but the idea of Yahweh as king, Yahweh having a royal throne, and Yahweh's continuous or future reign is present

2. Did John the Baptist preach the Kingdom of God?

- not in Luke. other gospel writers say yes... Mt. 3:2 'repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'

- in Luke, the emphasis is on preparation of the people -- the 'repent' part. cf. angel to Zech.: he will make ready a people prepared for the Lord; is this a people prepared to be subjects?

- Did John's imprisonment kick off Jesus' preaching?

Again, clearer in the other Gospels than in Luke, perhaps because of what he's doing with the inauguration sermon

Mt. 4:17 // Mk. 1:14-15 from that time // after Jn had been taken into custody
 Luke instead starts with prophecy in 1:33 - his kingdom will never end; then Lk. 4:43 I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.

Debate:

For Jesus, the kingdom of God was a present (not a future) reality OR

For Jesus, the kingdom of God was a future (not a present) reality.

3. Inaugurated Kingdom

the multitude of 'is at hand' and 'is drawn near' passages (although the 'finger of God' passage, then it has come upon you)

all future (consistent)

all present (realized)

started now, consummation later (inaugurated)

4. The Meaning of the Kingdom

a) The Reign of God – Divine Government

Other people expected a 'territory'-like Kingdom of God

Much more satisfactory is the idea that the kingdom of God means something like 'the rule of God' or 'the reign of God' in which case "the kingdom of God is coming" would mean something more like "God is about to exercise his prerogatives as the King and Master of the Universe".

Stein argues that this is clearly shown by such verses as Luke 19:12, 15

A nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom and then return... When he returned, having received the kingdom....

Jesus rejected territory and nationalism and instead taught a supernatural truth: we are best off saying not 'kingdom' but 'kingship' or 'rule'...

The presence of such a Kingly rule is clearly seen in Jesus' authority and miracles and other divine prerogatives

- this view is a reaction to the wrong view rather than a true understanding of the range of texts. the evidence doesn't really point this way...

The view is that other people did not expect 'territory' but sovereign socio-political community

BUT They expected a sovereign people/nation; but could only conceive of that as a landed people, so territory was probably a part of the equation.

Ac 1:6 So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Lu 14:15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

Lu 23:51 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God.

- thus there is more of a time element than a location/territory element

Lu 19:11 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

Lu 17:20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 17:21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

Jesus clearly was speaking about more than God's kingly authority

There is a perfectly good greek word for reign -- and it's used by Luke (eg of Claudius and Tiberius 3:1, Acts 11:28) but only once for Messiah's 'reign' -- where it is paired with kingdom in 1:33 (on the lips of the angel: 1:32 The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end.)

To you belongs God's authority?

6:20 blessed are you poor for yours is the kingdom of God

18:16 The kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

But the phrases used in conjunction with the Kingdom of God show we are not talking about the action of governing or rule or reign, we are talking about the sphere in which that authority happens...

b) The country marked by God's rule and authority

The idea of 'realm' like United Kingdom is not a silly one, nor is it alien to the OT use of *malkut* nor the Greek use of *basileus*, and there may be parts of the Scripture, especially when referring to the future kingdom, when this is an appropriate way to think of the kingdom This is a better way of thinking of the revolutionaries' point of view

but we are not permitted to make the simple contrast that looks natural from Matthew, between kingdoms of earth and the kingdom of heaven. Even in John, when Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world", what is meant is much much different than him saying something like "My kingdom is on Mars" — it is not geographically remote, rather it is qualitatively other.

c) The time/era marked by God's rule and authority

This is more the traditional apocalyptic scheme... but Jesus' teaching as a whole doesn't really suit this view either... for it is not just something that is coming nearer and happens to you, instead it is also something that you can be thrown out of or enter and even in some way struggle to enter. Cf also his confusing teaching about presence/future

d) The community/people marked by God's rule and authority

That community/people ruled by God and with whom he dwells; To some extent that is a present reality

his presence w/ us incarnation - dwelling of the Holy Spirit

community responsibility is integral part of the kingdom, not merely an implication of serving God. we are fellow subjects/heirs of the king.

That's why 'preaching the kingdom' becomes such a catch-all phrase about Jesus' (and Paul's) teaching. it includes not only God's centrality, but guidelines of protocol for dealing with God and each other.

e) Set of Relationships or State of Affairs

This adds another dimension, namely that of the new relationship between God the Ruler and his people the subjects. This is something that is as close to the idea of Realm as it is to the emphasis of God's rule. Perhaps the best term is the 'Community under God', a people who accept that there is a new order, and their allegiance to it is from now on the most important thing. One must receive this new state of affairs the way a child accepts theirs

———Little Children and Jesus - 18:16 the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

———The Rich Young Man 18 A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No-one is good--except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: `Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and mother.'" 21 "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" 27 Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." 28 Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" 29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no-one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

A set of relationships or a state of affairs in which God is recognized as King and Master. All other loyalties are renounced (not just in terms of physical loyalties, but also our bondage to sin—repentance) and obedience is given Him, while He, for his part protects us and gives us the various gifts of the kingdom.

5. Why did Jesus not use the term Covenant?

Certainly what I've outlined seems like the term 'the new covenant' would describe it beautifully—indeed from passages in the OT, it is clear that it did describe it beautifully there! But Jesus wanted the people of that time to be clear of the radical difference.

a). Covenant was tied up with obedience, the Kingdom focuses on recognition of God and his grace

b). The Covenant was tied up with the concept of chosen race, the Kingdom focuses on individual decision as a condition of entry into the covenant people, and that entry is open to all

I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects [sons] of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So also the Pharisee and the tax collector Lk 18:9-14

c). The acceptance of the Kingdom is tied up somehow with the person and work of Jesus—he must be recognized and submitted to. He bears the authority of the King and Kingdom in himself. The Covenant has become flesh.

Entering the Kingdom is a matter of recognition, submission and receiving. to some extent present, but obviously, we look forward to its consummation/complete actualization at the end, when we dwell with him in a different way.

Rev. 1:6; 5:10 = he has made us a kingdom

Rev. 1:5 To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Rev. 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy... and with your blood you purchased people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."