



Adult Education

33 Mk 1:14



Rev c

The Gospel According to Paul
Griffith-Jones, Robin
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The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God

*Mk 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching **the gospel of the kingdom of God**, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

This is the only occurrence of the phrase *gospel of the Kingdom of God* in the NT, though the phrase *gospel of the kingdom* appears in Matthew three times. But here Mark does not explain what this word *gospel* means. It obviously was not the gospel as we understand it. It was perhaps the prophetic gospel of Isaiah 61:1-4.

The Kingdom of God is eternal. It existed before the Universe was created, it will be in the future, and it is now. It is spiritual. ^A

It may help to distance yourself from the idea that the kingdom of God is a *place*, if you think of man as spirit and *the body only as the house in which man lives*. Man is the spirit in a house which was created by Christ. When man has completed all the work that God expects of man, the natural body will be disposed of, and man will continue to live in eternal life as Christ has promised.

Man will receive a spiritual body, like the spiritual body that Christ received.

^A added (2/15/2007)

Notes

61:1 ¶ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; 2 to declare the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompence; to comfort all that mourn; BLXX (Septuagint)

Sounds strange? Well this is just an allegory for eternal life in Christ, but this point of view may help you understand some of the Evangelists writings.

So, lets ponder on the idea that *you* are a *spirit* within a body.

God, we know, is Spirit, and Christ is spirit, and the Holy Ghost is spirit, and now you know that what is called *man* in the Bible, is also spirit, neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Gentile. ^B

Now, (1Co 12:27) *Now ye are the body of Christ,*

becomes clear, for as spirits y'all can share a life with Christ.

(Co 12:13) *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body [spiritual] ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

And again Paul said:

(1Co 15:50) *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood ^Ccannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

Now we understand what he meant. It is the spirit (man) which inherits the Kingdom of God (which is spirit also).

Notes

^B It is only the body that distinguishes.

Col 3: 10 after the image of Him that created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

^C see also lesson 34 **Baptism by Fire and Spirit**- Acts 2:38-47 regarding the baptism on the day of Pentecost.

Understanding

*2Co 5:6-8 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst **we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.,*

Here Paul talks about “we” being distinct from the fleshly body. Now consider this statement by Paul about an experience he had in Heaven (he writes as if it happened to another, but he is referring to himself.)

(Co 12:2) I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

And again: When Paul writes:

(1Co 13:3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

He says if he gives **his body** to be burned; not **himself** to be burned. Paul seems to understand clearly that the man and the body are different .

When you understand this idea that man is spirit you will see that it is *man*, the spirit, that enters the Kingdom of God, and it is the Kingdom of God that enters *man*.

Notes

Understanding

The first book of the NT that mentions the Kingdom of God is Matthew (though Mark quoted on page one was written earlier).

*(Mt 6:33) But seek ye first the **kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.***

*(Mt 12:28) But if **I** cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the **kingdom of God** is come unto you.*

Now replace the expression *Kingdom of God* with the word “Christ”, or “Messiah”. And reread these verses.

*(Mt 6:33) But seek ye first **Christ, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.***

*(Mt 12:28) But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the **Messiah** is come unto you.*

Beginning to see “the light” now?

(Mr. 4:11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God...

The mystery? - That the Kingdom of God, is Jesus Christ the Messiah.

But Jesus forbade Peter and the disciples to call Him “the Messiah”:

*(Mark 9:9) And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, **till the Son of man were risen from the dead.***

Now you can understand what Paul meant by, *you* entering into Christ, and Christ entering in to *you*.

Notes

*(Mr 8:29-30) And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, **Thou art the Christ.** And he charged them that they should **tell no man of him.***

*(Jo 1:49-50) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, **thou art the Son of God;** thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.*

Support for this idea from the Church Fathers

Origen said: “Christ who is all virtue, **has come**. For this reason He says that the kingdom of God is within His disciples - not here or there.”

Cyprian c. 250 said: “Dearest Brethren **Christ himself may be the kingdom of God**, whom we day by day desire to come ... The kingdom of God may be understood to be Himself, since in Him we will reign.”

Let us use this understanding that the Kingdom of God is Christ and unravel a difficult parable about the Kingdom of God (KOG).

Mr. 4:30-32 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

Below, I have replace the KOG, and references to it, with “Christ”.

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the Christ? or with what comparison shall we compare Christ? Christ is like a small seed which, when first planted, is less than all the seeds that ever were planted before (Moses, Elijah, etc.) : But when Christ is incarnate (in man), His seed grows and becomes greater than all the others before - a worldwide source of sustenance for all, and people no longer have to search for nourishment, so, can rest.

Notes

(Mt 13:4) And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and **the fowls came and devoured them up:**

(Re 19:17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to **all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;**

Now we see that the seed is a metaphor for the spirit of God the Son (the KOG), which is sown in the earth after His crucifixion, and we are the disciples who grow with Christ and build churches (branches), and the fowls of the air are the congregations who find rest in our midst and who feed on the spirit of God the Son.

And here is another parable about the Kingdom of God
(Lu 13:20-21) And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Using the same substitutions, and adding the inspiration of Augustin from his book of Sermons.

1. “The three measures of meal” of which the Lord spake, is the human race. ... That holy “woman who hid the leaven,” is Wisdom. (Sermon 61).

Whereunto shall I liken Christ? He is like the yeast, which Wisdom took and hid in the human race till the whole was risen. - Consider these other passages in this new light.

(Lu 14:15) And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

We now understand: blessed is he that shall eat the bread in (of) Christ.

Notes

Understanding

Here is a longer passage:

(Lu 17:20-23) And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

Now the substitution of Messiah/Christ for Kingdom of God

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Messiah should come, he answered them and said, **The Messiah cometh not with observation:** Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **Christ is within you.** The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Messiah and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

And what does the *the kingdom of heaven* mean?

The kingdom of Heaven is an metaphor for the Christian Way (the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, or the preaching of Christ).

*(Matthew 24:14) And this **gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

*(Mt 7:21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into **the kingdom of heaven**; but he that **doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven.*

“That person is already in the Kingdom of the heavens who lives according to the virtues. Accordingly, the saying *repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*, refers to deeds and disposition - not to a certain time.”

Origen c.245 quoted by Eusebius.

Notes Notice the parallel thoughts here between the phrases related to the KOG, and those related to the Son of Man.

- When will the **Kingdom of God** come // When ye shall desire to see one of the days of the **Son of man**.
- Lo here! or, lo there! // See here; or, see there.
- The Kingdom of God is within you // go not after them, nor follow them.

Notes

Mt 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . . Mt 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . Mt 19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

ISBN

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Mt 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Mt 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Mt 19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Someone said to me: In that case there is no hope for any of us!

Now, “righteous living” was the way of the Pharisees, who lived by God’s law, and thought that this was what God wanted. They declared themselves righteous people.

But it is only God who can declare who is righteous. Righteousness is the condition that you are in, after God has declared you righteous. It is God who by His righteous judgment judges or declares one as righteous. Man cannot become righteous from his own actions. Man has no authority/power to judge anyone else as righteous. So here we see that Jesus is saying that unless God the Father judges you as righteous, you *shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*.

Notes

Cranmer said: ‘Justification by Faith includes the doctrine [system of opinion] that it is impossible for man “by his own acts, words and deeds [to] be made righteous before God”

N.T. Wright said: Initial justification is received by faith alone. But “future justification, acquittal at the last great Assize, always takes place on the basis of the totality of the life lived”

Man cannot influence God’s judgment, so even though what the Pharisees were doing was good, unless God had judged them righteous, they were not allowed into the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

God chooses who will enter the *Kingdom of Heaven* - those He declares righteous, He converts and makes as little children. That is, He gives the grace of repentance, to man, who then is drawn to change his fleshly life, demonstrates this desire to others, accepts Christ as his Lord and King, and studies the word of God - as if a child, accepting all he is taught. And thereby man enters the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

Now this is not the *Kingdom of God* for this is entered when Christ is incarnate in man. It comes after man believes in and understands God’s Will, and hands over his life to doing the will of God, putting Christ in command of his physical capabilities.

Now it is very hard for someone who is rich to do any of these things: to change lifestyle, to give control of his life to God, to become a student again. So even just to enter the Kingdom of Heaven is difficult for the rich. To enter the *Kingdom of God* is almost impossible, as Jesus said.

Mr 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Notes

Cranmer: “ For justification he is wholly dependent upon another righteousness or justification which he owes to the great mercy of God as expressed and realised in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, which is the conjunction of God’s wrath and God’s grace.’

More Insight

We know from our studies on Aramaic Idiom that the Aramaic word for camel was the same as for rope. Only nomadic people of the desert would have meant camel. Fishermen and people who traveled by sea would have meant it as rope.

Now a rope is composed of hundreds of small fibers. If you unravel the rope and discard the bulk of it you will end up with a thin strand, like cotton thread, that can be easily threaded through a needle. So the moral is that if a rich Christian gets rid of most of his “stuff” he could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God.

Does he have to give it away? Well, that’s another lesson.

Notes

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae -
Glen C. Miller OSV

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.