

The Kingdom of God and the Mission of God: Part 1

by Rick Brown

Theologian John Bright wrote that if the Bible were to be given a title, it should be “The Book of the Coming Kingdom of God,” because “that is, indeed, its central theme everywhere.”¹ Alfred Edersheim said that the Kingdom of Heaven “is the whole Old Testament *sublimated*, and the whole New Testament *realised*.”² The Gospels record that our Lord “Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 9:35: cf. Matt 4:24). Then he told his disciples that “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14).³ The book of Acts ends with the statement that Paul was “proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:31).

Not surprisingly, the mission of God is often described as the establishment of his Kingdom, which was inaugurated with God’s incarnation as Jesus the King, is continuing with the spread of his Kingdom to every ethnic group, and will be consummated in the age to come, as described in Revelation 21–22.⁴ Tennent writes, “No sharing of the gospel can be considered adequate apart from an understanding of the kingdom of God.”⁵ At the same time, “a proper understanding and revelation of the Kingdom of God reveals the mission of God.”⁶ But as the Gentiles turned to Christ and the church grew among them, the concept of the Kingdom of God became somewhat marginal to their thought. The historian Viviano says the Gentiles did not understand the concept of the Kingdom of God because they lacked an adequate knowledge of its Old Testament roots in Daniel and its first-century Jewish cultural background.⁷ Over the last fifty years, however, biblical scholarship has grown in its understanding of the concept of the Kingdom of God and of its relevance to ministry and life. In what follows I briefly outline the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God, showing that it is a complex concept with many components of meaning. In Part Two I will examine Christ’s teachings about the Kingdom and discuss

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their significance for understanding the mission of God and our part in it.

1. Old Testament and Jewish Background to the Kingdom of God

The concept of the Kingdom of God originates in the Old Testament. There one finds the Hebrew word *malikut* “kingdom” with regard to God in two main senses. One is sovereignty, so when used of God’s sovereignty the phrase signifies his *cosmic* or *universal* reign. An example is Psalm 103:19: “The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.” The second sense is the common one of a nation-state. When used in this sense with regard to God, it signifies the redemptive kingdom that God will establish on earth, and this is the focus of this article. This Kingdom established by God is sometimes called his *mediatorial* or *messianic* kingdom, because it is through this kingdom that God mediates his will and redemptive purposes in the person of the savior king, the Messiah.⁸ The clearest Old Testament passages about this are in Daniel:

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, (Dan 2:44)

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed ... But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever. (Dan 7:13–14, 18)

This future redemptive kingdom was presaged by the kingdom God created among the children of Israel. When God delivered them from Egypt and brought

them to Mt. Sinai, he said to them, “you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:6). He was acknowledged as their national King (Isa 44:6), and they were his people (Exod 6:7; Deut 7:6). He would care for them as their Father (Deut 32:6; Jer 31:9), and they would corporately be his son (Exod 4:22–23; Hos 11:1) and children (Deut 14:1). When David and his descendants were appointed human kings over God’s people, they were subordinate kings to God, the “great King.” They ruled as his “sons” over his kingdom (Ps 89:27; 1 Chr 17:13–14; 29:11; cf. Ps 82:6;



2 Chr 13:8), sitting “on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord” (1 Chr 28:5; cf. 2 Chr 9:8).

The prophets revealed that in the future God would put a righteous son of David on the throne, who would save God’s people and rule his kingdom in righteousness (Jer 33:14–16). Isaiah described this righteous King as divine and his rule as everlasting, leading to an age of blessing (Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–10). He described that future age as God’s “salvation”:

He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, ... let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (Isa 25:8, 9)

By the first century, Jewish theologians were interpreting many more biblical passages as Messianic, especially those that mention a future “son,” “messiah,” or “David.”⁹ References to God’s future triumphant reign were interpreted as Messianic as well.¹⁰ A Jewish

hymn written before Christ implores God to “raise up for them their king, the son of David,” “the Lord Messiah,” “the king of Israel.”¹¹ The Eighteen Benedictions of the synagogue service did likewise, praying that God would send the “Messiah,” “the Son of David,” to bring in God’s “salvation.” The Jewish teachers called this salvation “the Kingdom of Heaven,” “the Kingdom of God,” “the Kingdom of the LORD,” “the kingdom of David,” “the Kingdom of the Messiah,” or the “Days of the Messiah.”¹² It was thought by many that the Messiah would appear from heaven, perhaps as Enoch or Melchizedek returned.¹³ They did not yet know the Messiah would be God incarnate. It was expected that the messianic kingdom would be a time of great blessing under the Messiah’s righteous rule and that it would last many centuries, to be followed by the new world in the age to come, which would be perfect and eternal.¹⁴ Zechariah wrote:

And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one. (Zech 14:9)

The Jewish scholar Klausner wrote,

This is one of the fundamental verses of the Jewish conception of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the Messianic hope of Judaism, and the spiritual goal of human history.¹⁵

Another Jewish theologian wrote that

the drama of history moves toward the climax of the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.¹⁶

By the time of Jesus, Daniel’s vision of the seventy weeks was fueling anticipation that the time was near for the Messiah to appear and inaugurate the Kingdom of God.¹⁷

Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech 9:9)

2. Characteristics of the Kingdom of God

Before going further, however, we should examine the concept of a kingdom. Kraybill provides the

The Bible also makes it clear that God’s Kingdom mission is motivated by his love: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Jonathan Falwell puts it this way, that “the kingdom is the expression of the mission of God, and the mission springs from the heart of God.”²⁰

It is also clear from the New Testament that God undertakes this mission in the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each of whom plays a special role. While the Christian theological tradition has always held that the actions of the Trinity are one and inseparable, it has also recognized that a special “mission” is “appropriated” to each Person of the Trinity. Timothy

Tennent has articulated these roles in God’s mission in terms that reflect the tradition, using *missio Dei* in place of the traditional but archaic term “economy”:

God the Father: the providential source and goal of the *missio Dei*;
 God the Son: the redemptive embodiment of the *missio Dei*;
 God the Holy Spirit: the empowering presence of the *missio Dei*.²¹

Paul himself articulates God’s triune manner of ministry:

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:4-6)

In summary, the Kingdom of God is characterized by complexity, by phases of development, and by the love of God in his mission to establish it, manifested through the missions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. The People and Ecclesiae of the Kingdom

Williamson notes that the “rich and varied message [about the Kingdom] clusters about two major foci: Jesus as king and his disciples as subjects in the Kingdom of God.”²² This would be in addition to the major stages of the Kingdom: present and future. A careful consideration of all of the kingdom passages in the Gospels shows that the aspects of the Kingdom most frequently in focus are the community of citizens itself (those in the Kingdom) and the

Table 1: Aspects of the Kingdom of God

	A Normal Kingdom	The Kingdom of God
King	A kingdom is ruled by a king or queen.	The Kingdom of God is ruled by the Christ, a title which means the king sent by God to mediate his saving rule to his people.
Accession	A normal king receives his kingship from his father or by appointment from a higher king.	The Messiah is anointed to be King by his Father, the “Great King.”
Length of reign	A king rules for a period of time, usually until he dies.	The Messiah King lives and rules forever.
Royal Authority	A king has nearly absolute authority over his subjects, except as he is subject to rules handed down from his father or a higher king.	The Christ has nearly absolute authority over earth and heaven. He fulfills the will of his Father.
Rule	A king rules over his subjects, governing them, granting them privileges, and regulating aliens within his realm.	The Messiah King rules over his subjects, governing them, granting them privileges, and restraining aliens.
Government	A king appoints those who will help govern, conferring on them varying degrees of responsibility and status.	The Messiah King appoints those who will reign with him.
Body Politic (citizens)	A kingdom includes a body of citizens. Their citizenship permits them to live in the realm under the protection of the king’s rule. Aliens enjoy fewer benefits.	The kingdom of Christ includes a body of citizens called the saints, the church, etc., who enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom. Aliens enjoy fewer benefits and will eventually be excluded.
Citizenship	There are criteria for being a citizen, including allegiance to the king or government, and a procedure by which an alien may become a citizen.	The criterion for citizenship is faith in Christ as the eternal savior-king. The outward sign of becoming a citizen is baptism.
Laws	Laws and traditions govern the behavior of a kingdom’s citizens. By obeying the laws they exercise good citizenship.	The “Kingdom law” is to love one’s neighbor (James 2:8). Its ethos is “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).
Service and Obedience	Citizens relate to their king as his servants (whereas, in a democracy, the government serves the people).	Citizens of Christ’s kingdom are called to trust and obey him and to serve the Kingdom and its citizens.
Benefits	The king and his government provide services, maintain public order, and enforce right behavior.	The King provides forgiveness, eternal life, and “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”
Realm	There is a territory over which a king exercises his authority—over both the citizens and aliens living in it.	Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.
Residency	Citizens have a right to reside in the king’s realm.	Citizens have a right to reside in Christ’s kingdom in heaven.
Gatherings of citizens	Citizens are allowed to participate in local assemblies of citizens, which in Greek were called an <i>ecclesia</i> .	Citizens of the Kingdom of God on earth gather in local assemblies, which the Greek NT calls an <i>ecclesia</i> . This is translated into English as ‘a church.’

Table 2: Texts that focus on particular aspects of the Kingdom

Verse with <i>kingdom</i> term (cited from <i>English Standard Version</i>)	Relevant concept within schema (various versions as noted*)
King(ship)	
John 18:36	My <i>kingdom</i> is not of this world. My <i>kingship</i> is not of this world (RSV); I am not an earthly <i>king</i> . (NLT)
Accession	
Luke 19:12	A nobleman went into a far country to <i>receive for himself a kingdom</i> and then return. A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to <i>be crowned king</i> and then return. (NLT)
Length of Reign	
Luke 1:33	and of his <i>kingdom</i> there will be no end. and his <i>reign</i> will have no end. (NJB)
Royal Authority	
Heb 1:8	the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your <i>kingdom</i> . You <i>rule</i> with a scepter of justice (NLT)
Luke 22:29	and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a <i>kingdom</i> , So I will give you <i>the right to rule as kings</i> , just as my Father has given me the right to rule as a king. (CEV)
1 Cor 4:20	For the <i>kingdom</i> of God does not consist in talk but in power. For <i>authority</i> in the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.
Rule, Reign	
1 Cor 15:25	For he must <i>reign</i> until he has put all his enemies under his feet. Christ will <i>rule</i> until he puts all his enemies under his power, (CEV)
Government	
Matt 20:21	Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your <i>kingdom</i> . Say that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, <i>in positions of authority in your kingdom's government</i> .
Laws	
Rom 14:17	For the <i>kingdom</i> of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; For the <i>ethos/customs/laws</i> of the kingdom of God are not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit;
James 2:8	If you really fulfill the <i>royal [basilikos] law</i> , according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. If you really fulfill <i>the law of the Kingdom</i> , according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.
Policies	
Matt 18:23	Therefore the <i>kingdom</i> of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. Therefore <i>the policies of the kingdom</i> may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.
Authority to make rules	
Matt 16:19	I will give you <i>the keys of the kingdom</i> of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. I will give you <i>the right to make laws for the people of the kingdom</i> of heaven, and God in heaven will allow whatever you allow on earth. But he will not allow anything that you don't allow. (second part from CEV)
Body Politic	
Rev 1:6	and made us a <i>kingdom</i> , and made us a <i>people/community</i> of his kingdom,
Matt 18:4	Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in <i>the kingdom</i> of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest among <i>the people of the kingdom</i> of heaven.
Matt 13:31	<i>the kingdom</i> of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field ... <i>the kingdom community</i> will start small but will gradually increase and become a blessing to many
Citizenship	
Mark 12:34	You are not far from the kingdom of God. You are not far from <i>becoming a citizen of the kingdom</i> of God.
Matt 21:31	the prostitutes <i>go into the kingdom</i> of God before you. the prostitutes are <i>becoming citizens in the kingdom</i> of God before you.
Matt 5:3	for theirs is <i>the kingdom</i> of heaven. for they <i>have citizenship in the kingdom</i> of heaven. // They belong to the kingdom of heaven! (CEV)
Heb 12:28	let us be grateful for receiving a <i>kingdom</i> that cannot be shaken let us be grateful for receiving <i>citizenship in a kingdom</i> that cannot be shaken
Realm	
Matt 13:41	they will gather out of his <i>kingdom</i> all causes of sin and all law-breakers, they will gather out of his <i>realm</i> all causes of sin and all law-breakers,
2 Tim 4:18	The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his <i>heavenly kingdom</i> . The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his <i>kingdom/realm in heaven</i> .
Residency	
1 Cor 15:50	flesh and blood cannot <i>inherit the kingdom of God</i> flesh and blood cannot <i>reside</i> in God's realm
Service and Obedience	
Luke 9:62	No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for <i>the kingdom</i> of God. No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for <i>service to the kingdom</i> of God.

*Verses with no version noted are the author's paraphrase.

10 The Kingdom of God and the Mission of God: Part 1

process of becoming a citizen (entering the Kingdom).²³ The New Testament itself provides a rich variety of designations for citizens of the Kingdom, both as individuals and as a collective body, as shown in Table 3 below.²⁴

The Greek word *ekklesia* (Latin and English *ecclesia*) was originally used to denote assemblies of citizens of a

Table 3: Diverse terms for citizens of the Kingdom

<p><i>The citizens of the Kingdom (as individuals)</i></p> <p>sons of the kingdom sons of God sons of Abraham servants of God/Christ heirs of eternal life heirs of the kingdom heirs of God fellow heirs with Christ brethren/brothers saints (in Christ) believers citizens disciples Christians obedient to the faith belonging to the Way those who are saved those who are being saved members of Christ members of the body of Christ those who are in Christ/the Lord partakers of the promise in Christ fellow citizens with the saints members of the household of God those considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead</p> <p><i>The citizenry of the Kingdom (as a body)</i></p> <p>the kingdom of God/Christ the household of faith the people of God/Christ the brotherhood the church of God/ Christ a holy nation the household of God/Christ the flock of God/Christ the body of Christ the sheep (of Christ) the bride of Christ the temple of God</p>

kingdom. Only citizens were allowed to participate; slaves and aliens were excluded. The New Testament uses this same term for local bodies of citizens of the Kingdom of God, what we call in English local “churches.” The New Testament also uses the term to refer to the body of Kingdom citizens as a whole, what some have called the “Kingdom community.”²⁵ This consists of everyone who is born again of God and belongs to the family and Kingdom of God. The Kingdom community is both the result of God’s mission and a means for its blessings and expansion to all peoples of the earth.

In Kingdom communities, all citizens of the Kingdom are equal, regardless of their social identities in the world. “Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all” (Col 3:11). They are all God’s sheep, under one Shepherd, even if socially they belong to different folds.

Jesus made this same distinction using figurative language. He said to his Jewish disciples, “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock,

one shepherd” (John 10:16). There is one shepherd and flock, but more than one fold. At that time there was not only a group of Jewish disciples who believed in him, there were groups of Gentiles who believed in him as well in Tyre, Gerasa, and Decapolis, in addition to Samaritan believers. So if the “one flock” denotes the members of the Kingdom as a whole, the “folds” must represent diverse groups of believers.²⁶ This is shown in Figure 1.

At the same time, Jesus said there were some “tares” (weeds) inside his realm who were not really “sheep” but “goats,” not “sons of the Kingdom” but “sons of the devil” (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43; 25:32), some of them even like “wolves” “in sheep’s clothing” (Matt 7:15). This became apparent later in the local churches, where in addition to believers and seekers there were “false brothers” (Gal 2:4), who “never really belonged” (1 John 2:19 NLT). So the situation should be represented more like the diagram in Figure 2.

Jesus said of the wheat and tares, “Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but

Figure 1: The “sheep” of the Kingdom flock are found in different “folds” within a world of goats.

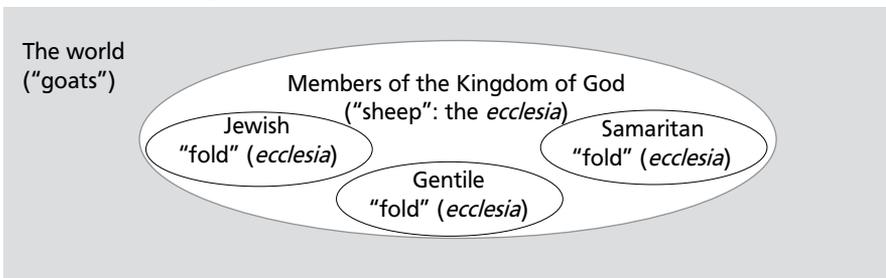


Figure 2: A typical local assembly includes members and nonmembers of the Kingdom.

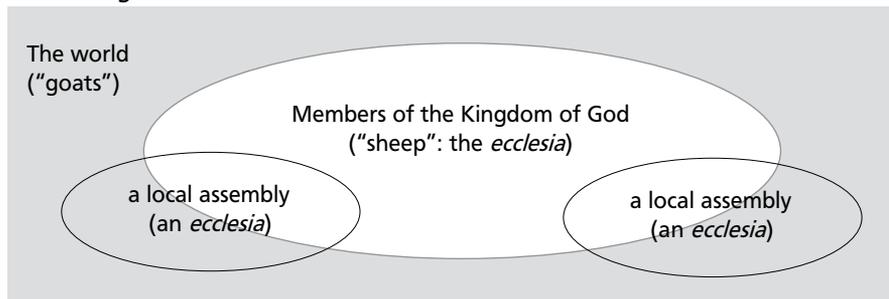


Figure 3: The visible churches include sheep and non-sheep, citizens of the Kingdom and aliens.

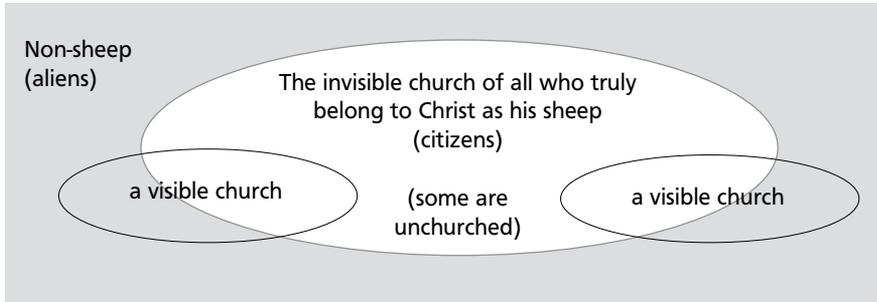
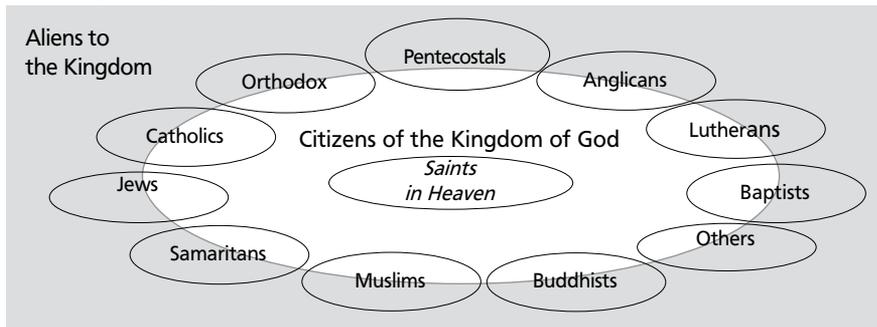


Figure 4: The Kingdom of God includes people from many different socioreligious groups.³⁰



gather the wheat into my barn” (Matt 13:30). He said he would separate people at the judgment, “as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Matt 25:32).

Calvin noted that “many wolves are within the fold,”²⁷ and he quoted Augustine saying “there are very many sheep without, and very many wolves within” the visible church.²⁸ Calvin therefore distinguished between the “invisible church” of true sheep, whether in a visible fold or not, and the “visible church,” which includes both true sheep and non-sheep.²⁹ This is shown in Figure 3.

The truth of these images is seen in the fact that true, born-again believers in Jesus Christ are found today in a variety of socioreligious groups. This is shown in Figure 4.

Membership in a socioreligious group or subculture is evident through their shared language and customs, shared social networks, and common ethnic identity. Some cultures present special challenges for followers of Christ, such as Muslim and Buddhist

cultures. The post-Christian cultures of Europe present a different challenge. As for people’s membership in the Kingdom of God, although there is a lack of physical evidence (such as a Kingdom passport), the evidence for it is found in their shared faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, their love for God and the saints, their meeting together as faith communities to praise God and learn from his Word, and their shared spiritual identity as members of his Kingdom.

When people come to faith in Jesus Christ and “enter the Kingdom,” it is not uncommon for some of them to join another socioreligious group, often at the invitation of members of that group. So one finds Pentecostals who have become Messianic Jews, Jews who have become Baptists, Baptists who have joined an Orthodox church, Muslims who have become Catholics, and Catholics who have become Pentecostals or Anglicans. Many believers, however, remain in the socioreligious group in which they were born. In such cases the “Kingdom of God spreads in and through [their]

social networks ... like yeast in the dough.”³¹ It is not my purpose, however, to argue for or against people converting from one group to another, as that is their decision, but rather to note that God is actively saving people of every ethnicity into his eternal Kingdom while redeeming their cultures as well, and He alone knows how their faith communities will develop in future generations.

May his Kingdom come, his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. IJFM

Endnotes

¹ John Bright, *The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and its Meaning for the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), p. 197.

² Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), vol. 1, p. 265.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Scripture in English are taken from the ESV, *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001, 2007 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. This translation has rendered the Greek word *ethnos* as “nation,” but the word means “nation” only in its archaic sense of an ethnic group, meaning a “people group” with its own identity, culture, and dialect.

⁴ Similarly in Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), p. 478. “The mission of God is to lead the whole creation and all nations to that universal worship that so fills the final vision of the canon of Scripture.”

⁵ Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), p. 342. He adds (p. 343), “The kingdom of God encompasses the origin, purpose, and final destiny of the entire universe.”

⁶ Delton D. Fernander, *The Kingdom Focused Life* (Xulon Press, 2008), p. 97.

⁷ Benedict Viviano, O. P., *The Kingdom of God in History* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988), p. 32.

Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (revised edn.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 41.

⁸ See Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God as Set Forth in the Scriptures*

12 The Kingdom of God and the Mission of God: Part 1

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), p. 21; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940 [1871]), p. 856.

⁹ It was later claimed that all of the prophecies speak of Messiah (Talmud Sanhedrin 99a). For a list of Old Testament passages applied to the Messiah in ancient rabbinic writings, see Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Appendix 9. For extensive examples of the use of the phrase 'Son of God' in the first century and before to designate the king and the Messiah, see Adela Yarbro Collins and John Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008). In subsequent centuries the rabbis abandoned this usage and paraphrased it when translating the Bible, evidently to avoid anthropomorphic interpretations. It might be that this careful avoidance of the term by Jews influenced the Muslim custom that followed it.

¹⁰ A favorite passage of the nationalists was Micah 4:7, which says that the LORD will rule over them. This was rendered in the Targum as "the kingdom of the Lord." The following verse then interpreted this as mediated through the Messianic kingdom: "And you, O anointed One of Israel, who have been hidden away because of the sins of the congregation of Zion, the kingdom shall come to you, and the former dominion shall be restored to the kingdom of the congregation of Jerusalem." (Translation from Kevin Cathcart and Robert Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets: Translated, with a critical introduction, apparatus, and notes* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989).)

¹¹ Psalm of Solomon 17; 21, 32, 42.

¹² See Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel: From its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (3rd edn.; New York: MacMillan, 1955), p. 524; T. Francis Glasson, 'The Temporary Messianic Kingdom and the Kingdom of God', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 41 (1990), p. 108; R. J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc, 1966) p. 229. Note that the Targum for Isaiah 53:10, about the Servant of the Lord, talks of his suffering inaugurating the Kingdom of the Messiah.

¹³ See 11QMelchizedek in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Book of Enoch in the Pseudepigrapha. In the New Testament see John 7:27.

¹⁴ Edersheim notes that in rabbinic expectations, the kingdom of the Messiah was but a stage in the realization of the kingdom of God on earth. See Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 267–268.

¹⁵ Joseph H. Hertz, *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book: Hebrew text, English Translation with Commentary and Notes* (revised edn.; New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1948), p. 211.

¹⁶ Samuel S. Cohon, 'Kingdom of Heaven', in Isaac Landman (ed.), *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (6; New York, 1942), p. 390.

¹⁷ "The Qumran community actually linked Isaiah 61 with Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks of years that should lead to the kingdom of God. They calculated that the fulfillment of both prophecies was about to happen." G. R. Beasley-Murray, 'The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 35/1 (1992), p. 21.

¹⁸ Donald Kraybill, *The Upside-down Kingdom* (revised edn.; Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1990), pp. 20–21.

¹⁹ For discussion of the temporal phases of the Kingdom, see George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); John MacArthur, *Matthew 1–7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. 56.

²⁰ Jonathan Falwell, *Innovate Church: 8 Innovative Ways to Lead and Grow the Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008), p. 112.

²¹ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*.

²² Lamar Williamson, Jr, *Mark: Interpretation—A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), p. 9.

²³ See W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (The Anchor Bible 26; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1971), p. lxxxvi.

²⁴ Note that the term "disciples" is not found in the Epistles, and that the terms found there, "saints" and "believers," are not found in the Gospels (except in Matt 27:52, where the referent is the Old Testament prophets). The term "brothers" is found throughout the New Testament.

²⁵ For this characterization of the global spiritual Church as "the Kingdom

community," see Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), p. 131. Moore emphasizes the holistic transformation of humans and their societies as the Kingdom grows in their midst.

²⁶ It might be noted that some of the first-century Jewish believers were upset by reports of Samaritans and Gentiles becoming followers of Christ.

²⁷ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1949), at 6:1.

²⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (London: J. Clarke, 1949 [1559]), p. 2288, book 4, chap. 1, §8. See Augustine of Hippo, "Lectures on the Gospel of John," *NPNF1* (7; New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co, 1890 [416]), at 10:16.

²⁹ See Calvin, *Institutes*, book 4, chap. 1.

³⁰ While a number of Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu communities include people who follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, it might be noted that some Christians are upset at reports of this.

³¹ Kevin Higgins, "Beyond Christianity-Insider Movements: The Place of the Bible and the Body of Christ in New Movements to Jesus," *AFMI/ASFM Bulletin*, 4 (2010), p. 5.