

Spirit and Kingdom

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In all the research which has gone into Jesus and the Kingdom in recent years too little attention has been given to the relation between the *Spirit* and the Kingdom--an understandable oversight in view of the paucity of references to the Spirit in Jesus' preaching, but regrettable nonetheless since this relationship is the key to understanding much of the Kingdom proclamation in the Synoptics.

I. That *pneuma* and *basileia* are closely related concepts is, of course, not in dispute. This is most obvious in Paul.¹ The interesting feature so far as this study is concerned is the manner in which they are linked. In the first place, the Spirit *prepares* a man for the Kingdom: if he is to inherit the Kingdom in the future he must experience the work of the Spirit in the present. In Paul's opinion no idolater, adulterer, thief or drunkard will inherit the Kingdom of God; only those who have been washed, sanctified and justified in and by the Spirit of God (1 Co 6:9-11). And that work of the Spirit first begun at conversion and initiation must continue throughout the Christian's life. If he gives way to the impulses and desires of the flesh he will lose his inheritance (*i.e.*, the Kingdom of God). Only if he follows the impulses and desires of the Spirit and so brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in his life will he in the end enter into his inheritance (Gal 5:16-23). The final preparatory work of the Spirit will be when he transforms the *sōma psuchikon* into a *soma pneumatikon* for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Co 15:41-50). Only those whose mortal bodies also have been given life through the indwelling Spirit (Ro 8:11; cf. Ph 3:21).

But Spirit and Kingdom dovetail even more closely than this in Pauline theology, for, secondly, the Spirit not only prepares a man for the future Kingdom, the Spirit also enables the Christian to experience the future Kingdom in the present. The Spirit is the *arrabon tas kleronomias* (Eph 1:14 that is, the first installment and foretaste of the Kingdom, for 'the inheritance is the

Kingdom of God'.² It is important to remember at this point that *arrabōn* means more than 'guarantee'; as 'first installment' or 'down payment' the *arrabōn* is part of and the same as the whole. The Spirit not only guarantees the full inheritance; he is himself the beginning and first part of that inheritance. This is why Paul can describe the Kingdom in terms of the Christian's present experience of the Spirit: 'the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Ro 14:17); it does not consist in talk but in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 4:20)³; God's call into His Kingdom is made *effectual* (*kalein*)⁴ through the Gospel by means of the gift of the Spirit and his sanctifying operation (1 Th 2:12-13, 4: 7-8; 2 Th 2:3-14)--a present process leading to an 'end' result. Compare also Col 1:12-14 where transfer into the Kingdom is equated with sharing the inheritance of the saints in light and experience of redemption and forgiveness.

The point to be noticed in all this is that not only do we have a present-future tension in Paul's thought about the Kingdom, but more important we see that this present-future tension is expressed by Paul in terms of the Spirit. *Basileia* in fact is one of these words whose use by Paul seems inconsistent and confusing till we realize first that they are as extensive in application as the Christian life is long, and second that the Spirit is the link which binds them all together, bringing consistency and clarity to their usage. I refer particularly to *anastasis*, *apolurōsis*, *dikaio sunē*, *doxa*, *zōē*, *sōtēria*, *niothesia*.⁵ In one sense *resurrection* is already past, for the Christian shares in Christ's resurrection (Col 2:12, 3:1); but in another sense resurrection is still future, for only in the resurrection of the body will the whole man be made alive (Ro 6:5, 8:11). In one sense Christians already have *redemption* (Ro 3:24; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14); but in another sense they still have to await redemption, that is the redemption of the body (Ro 8:23; Eph 1:14, 4:30). In one sense the Christian has already been justified (*e.g.*, Ro 5'); but in another sense *righteousness* is something he awaits

² W. Foerster, *klēronomos*, *T.W.N.T.* 3:782. in 4 out of 5 occurrences of *klēronomeō* in Paul is *basileia*.

³ Spirit and power are siamese-twin concepts in Hebrew thought: 'Anyone who wishes to know the New Testament connotation of "Spirit" must use the concordance also for the term "power", which is its chief content' (H. W. Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit* [1928], 128).

⁴ K. L. Schmidt, *kaleō*, *T.W.N.T.*, 3: 489.

⁵ One could add other concepts and metaphors like sanctification, marriage and putting on clothes.

¹ See particularly N. Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (1957), 21-25 ; J. D. Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance* (1968), 96-103; A. Schweitzer, *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity* (Eng. tr., 1968), 161-65, 181 ff.

and hopes to attain (Gal 5:5). For the most part Christians look forward to the *glory* yet to be revealed to them (e.g., Ro 8:18); but already they are being transformed from one degree of glory to another (2 Co 3:18). Christians have already been given new *life* (Ro 6:4, 12; 2 Co 3:5); but eternal life is still an end to be striven for (Ro 6:22, 8:13; Gal 6:8). They are already in process of being saved (1 Co 1:18, 15:2; 1 Co 2:15), but their *salvation* will be complete only in the final day (Ro 3:9, 13:11; 1 Th 5:8-9). They have already received the status of adopted sons (Ro 8:11; Gal 4:5), but they still wait for *adoption* as sons (Ro 8:23). In every case there is a present-future tension, a dual relationship between part and whole. Each word indicates that for Paul salvation is not something attained all at once in this life or wholly reserved for the next; rather it speaks of something begun though not yet completed, something participated in but not yet fully possessed.

In every case, too, the Spirit *is* the decisive factor determining this tension and relationship. The Spirit gives life in the present (2 Co 3:6) and will effect the resurrection of the body in the future. (Ro 8:11), for the Spirit *is* life for the Christian (Ro 8:10). The Spirit is the arrabwn of this ultimate transformation (2 Co 5:5) as he is the *aparachē* of the ultimate redemption (Ro 8:22). The Spirit effects a right relationship with God by his coming (1 Co 6:11), for the promise of the Spirit and the blessing of justification are two sides of the same coin (Gal 3:1-14); at the same time it is through the Spirit that Christians wait for the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:1). Christians are saved through the washing of regeneration and renewal effected by the Spirit (Tit 3:5), the very Spirit whose coming into their lives makes them sons (Ro 8:15). It is this present experience of the Spirit which gives them the sure hope that their salvation and sonship will be perfected in glory in the end through the same Spirit (Ro 8:22-24; cf. Gal 3:2 with Ph 1:6), for it is the same Spirit who even here and now is in process of transforming them into the very image of the Lord from one degree of glory to another (a Co 3:18). In short, the present-future tension is a function of the Spirit; the Spirit himself is the part now enjoyed of the whole yet to be realized; the Spirit operates the process leading to perfection, the fulfilled Now which works for the consummated Yet to be.

Basileia belongs wholly to this group of words in both these characteristics: it shares both the present-future tension and the key relationship with the Spirit, for as we noted above, the Spirit Himself is the *arrabōn* of the Kingdom (Eph 1:14). The Spirit we might say is the *present-ness* of the coming Kingdom. Where he is

the Kingdom is, that to have the Spirit is to have part and lot in the Kingdom here and now. Or to put it another way. The Spirit is the executive, ambassador or steward of the Kingdom: his power and authority are those of the King; his operation is the exercise of kingly rule. Thus the man who submits to the leading of the Spirit is already in and by that very act a son and heir entering into his inheritance (Ro 8:14), although, of course, he will enter it fully only when the Spirit has taken full control—that is, when he is *sōma pneumatikon*.

2. Turning now to the gospels, the obvious question is whether the Kingdom concept there shares the twin characteristics of *basileia* in Paul. On the first I need say little since the consensus among recent writers on the subject is that the Kingdom in the preaching of Jesus evinces the same present-future duality.⁶ What I wish to argue, however, is that for the Synoptic *basileia* this present-future tension is a function of and dependent upon the Spirit just as in Paul.

(a) Let me first demonstrate that Spirit and Kingdom are related; then we can examine the nature of this relationship. Although references to the Spirit are few in the Synoptics they are sufficient to show that Spirit and Kingdom are closely associated. In all three gospels the Spirit comes upon Jesus at Jordan with the words of the coronation psalm (Ps 2:7) echoing in His ears (Mt 3:16f; Mk 1:10f; Lk 3:22): Jesus is anointed by the Spirit as King. We might add that it is as the royal son that He is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted as to His sonship (Mt 4:1; Mk 1:12; Lk 4:1). And certainly His ministry of exorcism is by the power of the *Spirit* and proves that the *Kingdom* has come upon them, despite the Pharisees' blindness and blasphemy (Mt 12:28; cf. Mk 3:22-30): the Kingdom is present where the Spirit is at work. In Jesus above all God's kingly rule is actualized and manifested because God has put His Spirit upon Him and anointed Him to preach the good news of the Kingdom to the poor (Mt 12:18; Lk 4:16).

⁶ See N. Perrin's survey, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (1963). Particular reference should be made to W. G. Kümmel, *Promise. ad Fulfillment* (Eng. tr., 1957); also to R. Schnackenburg, *God's Rule and Kingdom* (Eng. tr., 1963) and G. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (1964), both of whom express their theme in terms of 'fulfilment' and 'consummation'. More generally see O. Cullmann *Christ and Time* (Eng. tr., 1962); *Salvation as History* (Eng. tr., 1967).

It is also worth remembering that in almost the only reference to the Kingdom in John entry into the Kingdom is described in terms of birth from Spirit (evk pnevmatos, Jn 3:2-9) We might also note that in Matthew the imminence of the Kingdom and the imminence of the Coming One's Spirit-and-fire baptism are equivalent or at least complementary elements in the Baptist's preaching (Mt 3:1-12).

In Luke's writings the connection between Spirit and Kingdom is rather fuller. It is a striking fact that in Acts 1:3-8 we have *pneuma* following closely upon *basileia* not once but twice. In 1:3 Luke sums up Jesus' teaching during the forty days after the Resurrection as *ta peri tēs basileias ton theon*. He then goes on⁷ to give one particular instance of this teaching: *viz.*, that they are soon to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. We might even say that v. 4 sums up Jesus' teaching of the forty days from a different angle. V. 3 tells us that when He appeared to them He spoke about the Kingdom of God. V. 4 tells us that when He was in their company He told them . . . to await the promise of God. V. 6 begins a new paragraph. Again the subject of the Kingdom of God is introduced. The question, be it noted, concerns the *timing* of its restoration to Israel, not its nature. Jesus refuses to answer this question; that is to say, He does not reject or rebuke their concern about the Kingdom, rather He rebukes their concern about the time of its establishment. He then immediately goes on to speak of the Spirit and His empowering. We might even say that v. 7 and v. 8 are the answer to the question of v. 6: Do not concern yourselves about the 'when' of the Kingdom; as to the 'what' of the Kingdom that which concerns you is that you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.⁸

There are two further indications in Luke that *pneuma* and *basileia* are closely connected. In Lk 12:31 f. Jesus tells His disciples that the *highest* thing they can seek and should seek is the Father's Kingdom, and also that it is the Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom. The only other place in Luke where Jesus speaks of the Father's willingness to give is 11:13: How much more will the heavenly Father give the *Holy Spirit* to those who ask Him. The Kingdom and the Spirit are alternative ways of speaking about the disciples' highest good. Then there is the Lukan variant to the 'Lord's Prayer': 'let thy Holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us'

⁷ In the Nestle text only a semi-colon comes between the end of v. 3 and the beginning of V. 4.

⁸ Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, 'Acts' in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (ed. M. Black, 1963), 744b.

instead of 'Let thy Kingdom come' (11:2). Despite its weak attestation it is possible that the former is the original reading, on the principle of *difficilior lecto*.⁹ But at the very least we have to say that someone thought the petition concerning the Spirit was an appropriate substitution for the petition concerning the Kingdom, or vice-versa. At all events we are left with some form of equation between Spirit and Kingdom: where the Spirit has come and cleansed, there is the Kingdom; or, to the extent that the Spirit has been received and submitted to, to that extent has the Kingdom come.

(b) Already the nature of the relationship between Spirit and Kingdom in the Synoptics is becoming clear. In terms of the present-future tension in the Kingdom concept we might put it this way: the presence of the Spirit is the 'already' of the Kingdom; the inadequacy of recognition of the Spirit's presence and submission to Him explains the 'not yet' of the Kingdom. The importance of this formulation is that *it explains the relationship between Jesus and the Kingdom*. For at once we see that the Kingdom is present in Jesus *only* because He has the Spirit. It is not so much a case of Where *Jesus* is there is the Kingdom, as Where the *Spirit* is there is the Kingdom. So in Mt 12:28 the fact which demonstrates the presence of the Kingdom there and then is not the presence of Jesus, and not even the power of Jesus (the power to cast out demons was nothing distinctive in itself), but rather the fact that it is *by the Spirit of God* that the exorcism is accomplished (note how emphatic is the *en pneumati theon*). It is because the *Spirit* is at work that they can be sure that the Kingdom has come. The manifestation of the Spirit is the manifestation of the Kingdom.

This insight highlights an important point: that during Jesus' earthly life the Spirit was the dominant partner. We see this most clearly in the relation between Jesus and the Spirit according to Luke's three-fold pattern of salvation history.¹⁰ In the first stage (the old covenant) Jesus is the *creation* of the Spirit (1:35). At the Jordan he becomes the uniquely anointed *Man of the Spirit*, the first fruits (to use a

⁹ For further considerations see A. R. C. Leaney's full discussion, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (1958), 59-68; on the antiquity of the petition see also E. Lobineyer, *The Lord's Prayer* (Eng. tr., 1965), 261-270.

¹⁰ Cf. H. von Baer, *Der heilige Geist in den Lukas-schriften* (1926), 77-84; H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (Eng. tr., 1961), 250. See further my *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (1970), 40-60.

Pauline expression) of the new age and covenant (3:22, 4:18; Acts 10:38).¹¹ Only the third stage, His exaltation, does He become *Lord of the Spirit* and Baptizer in Spirit (Acts 2:33). But during His earthly ministry, the intermediate stage, the Spirit is the dominant partner. Thus, though Luke does soften the strong words of Mk 1:12 (*to pneuma auton ekballei eis tēs erēmōn*), he still says Jesus' was led by the Spirit' (Lk 4:1—*hugeto evn tō pneumati*; cf. Ro 8:14; Gal 5:16). I suspect also that Mt 12:28 is the true rendering of Q¹² and that Lk 11:20 has preferred *en thaktulō theon to en pneumati theon* lest he should give the impression that the Spirit is already subordinate to Jesus; the Spirit is not to be thought of as the instrument of Jesus' power (cf. Lk 21:15). Jesus at this stage is still 'a man attested . . . by God' (Acts 2:36). Perhaps also we have here one of the reasons why in Luke speaking against the *Son of Man* is a less heinous offence than blasphemy against the *Holy Spirit* (12:10)—at this stage the Spirit is the more important figure.

Mark and Matthew share to some extent Luke's three period view of *Heilsgeschichte*. Mark, for example, recognizes a two-fold dispensational divide, the first between the Baptist and Jesus,¹³ and the second at the resurrection, for Mk 9:9 shows that Mark 'considered the resurrection as the dividing line between two epochs'.¹⁴ In the interim epoch for Mark as well as Luke Jesus alone has been baptized in the Spirit (1:8-12); only after the resurrection will the Spirit be *directly* experienced by the disciples (13:11). Similarly in Matthew a three-epoch pattern is evident—the period of Israel, the period of Jesus and the period of the Church.¹⁵ The relation of the Spirit to Jesus in each epoch is more or less the same as in Luke: Jesus the creation of the Spirit (1:18, 20), Jesus the unique bearer of the Spirit (3:16, 4:1, 12:18, 28), Jesus the future dispenser of the

Spirit (3:11; cf. 10:20). We might add in passing that John, too, is no stranger to this three-fold division of salvation-history, for 'the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is the middle term between the *logos* and the *paraklētos*'.¹⁶ For the epochal significance of the Spirit there note particularly 1:17 (*charis kai alētheia*—cf. 4:24; Spirit of truth—14:17, 15:26, 16:18; 1:33, 3:24, 7:39, 20:22).

We are now in a position to define the *raison d'être* of the present-future tension in the proclamation of the Kingdom in the Synoptics. To put it simply, the Kingdom is present because (and insofar as) the Spirit is operative in Jesus and submitted to by Jesus. But it is also future because the Spirit has yet to be bestowed on others. I said above that it is not so much a case of Where *Jesus* is there is the Kingdom, as Where the *Spirit* is there is the Kingdom. But of course neither of these statements are precise enough to describe the epochal significance of the period of Jesus. The Spirit had come upon other men before Jesus and yet the new age of the Spirit, the Messianic Kingdom had not come. And Jesus had been living for about thirty years before the kingdom could be said to be present in Him. It was only the unique coming of the Spirit on the unique man Jesus which brought the Kingdom among men—just as after Pentecost it was only the coming of *the Spirit of Jesus* upon men which made them sons and heirs. Thus when Jesus says, 'The Kingdom of God is among you' (Lk 17:21) we must understand Luke to mean that the Kingdom was present not simply because Jesus was present, but rather because Jesus as the unique Spirit-bearer was present.

In the period of Jesus therefore the Kingdom was *present* because only Jesus had been baptized in the Spirit into the Kingdom; Jesus alone was the Man of the Spirit, the pioneer citizen of the new age; the rule of God was being actualized and demonstrated in and through Him by the Spirit. In the period of Jesus the Kingdom was still *future* because only at Pentecost would other men be baptized in the Spirit into the Kingdom; only then would they enter the new age of the Spirit and begin to experience that tension between Spirit and flesh, present and future, part and whole, fulfilment and consummation about which Paul speaks so much and to which Jesus Himself was no stranger.

Finally, two corollaries. First, the thesis presented here yields us a very satisfactory answer to C. K. Barrett's question: 'In what sense can it be said that the preaching of the Church (characterized by the offer

¹¹ F. Buchsel is probably correct to argue that Jesus was not *Pneumatiker* prior to Lk 3:21; in support he points to the surprise and reaction of His own townspeople when they first saw the result of His Spirit-possession after His experience at Jordan (*Der Geist Gottes im Neuen Testament* [1926], 149 f; cf. Leaney, *op. cit.* 110).

¹² Cf. J. E. Yates, 'Luke's Pneumatology and Lk 11:20'. *Studia Evangelica* II, Part 1(1964). 295-99; R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, 'A Note on Matthew 12.28 • par. Luke 11.20, *N.T.S.* ix (1964-65), 267 f.

¹³ M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (1957), 22 f.

¹⁴ W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in des. Evangelien* (1901), 70 f.

¹⁵ G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* (1962), 184 f.

¹⁶ T. W. Manson, *On Paul and John* (1963), 159.

of personal experience of the Spirit) rests upon, or was derived from, that of Jesus (characterized by the assertion "The Kingdom of God is near")?¹⁷ Quite simply the two proclamations are *mutatis mutandis* identical. Where the Spirit had been so little bestowed (before Pentecost) the message of the Kingdom was more appropriate. Where the Spirit had been bestowed in richer measure (after Pentecost) there was no need to speak in such veiled terms. Whereas the Baptist's gaze was directed exclusively to the future when he spoke of the Kingdom (Mt 3:2— *hggken*)¹⁸ or the Spirit (Mt 3:11; Mk 3:16), Jesus' proclamation of the imminence of the Kingdom was balanced by His consciousness that in His possession of the Spirit the presence of the Kingdom had been realized. But whereas Jesus spoke predominantly in terms of the Kingdom and only sparingly of the Kingdom's or the Spirit's presence in and through Him, and whereas during Jesus' ministry the disciples' preaching of the Kingdom was exclusively future (Lk 10:9'— *hēggken*), according to Luke the early Church was so full of the Spirit that talk both of the Kingdom and of its still future aspect for the most part faded into the background, and the direct, immediate experience of the Spirit took central place.

Second, have we here the clue which enables us to untie that knotty saying of Jesus: 'There are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power' (Mk 9:1)? Does not the close relationship between Spirit and Kingdom add very strong support to the old interpretation which referred the prophecy to Pentecost? If the Kingdom's presence in Jesus was determined by the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus at Jordan, then may we, indeed must we not say that the Kingdom became present in the disciples by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost in the same way? This would not mean, of course, that the Kingdom came in consummating fullness at Pentecost, any more than at Jordan, for both these comings of the Kingdom are but the *arrabōn* and *aparchē* of the fuller, comprehensive, cosmic salvation still awaited. I would not be so bold as to claim that we have here proof positive of the Pentecost interpretation of Mk 9:1, nor, it is true, did any New Testament writer make the identification explicitly. Nevertheless I think it can safely be affirmed that all the writers we have examined above would agree that at Pentecost the Kingdom came 'in power'.

¹⁷ C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (1947), 140.

¹⁸ Mt 10:29 refers only to the post-Pentecostal situation (see Barrett, *op. cit.* 128 f.).