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## Review

# Eschatological tension in Mark 1:14-15: Its implication for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church in Africa

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**This paper focuses on eschatological tension in Mark 1:14-15. The two parallel eschatological tensions were identified in this *pericope*. This tension deals with the arrival that has taken place. The purpose of this essay is to detect a strain of eschatological tension in the Markan sayings tradition of 1:14-15, and to elucidate various implications of the inauguration of the kingdom for the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The methodological procedure used is historical-critical and grammatical investigation of the text in question in order to confirm the present reality of the kingdom of God in the Markan text. The linguistic argument points to the fact that an arrival has taken place thus the kingdom has been inaugurated in the person of Jesus Christ. The implication of this arrival is spelt out in this essay, thereby making exegesis practical to life and ministry.**

**Keywords:** Eschatology, kingdom, tension, implications.

## INTRODUCTION

The statement by Jesus in Mark 1:15 *peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou* meaning “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come (*is here*), is the subject of this essay. Verse 14 provides the historical setting for Jesus’ inaugural speech as he went to cities and villages to proclaim the gospel. Jesus begins his ministry in Palestine which was popularly referred to as a place of conflict, threat, racial mixture and trade activity. “The time is fulfilled” indicates that the threshold of the great future has been reached, that the door has been opened, and the prerequisites for the realization of the divine work of consummation are present, so that now the concluding drama can start (Gundry 63). Owing to

this, Jesus’ initial proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom seems to speak of a more advanced point of time than that of John who had not yet mentioned the beginning of fulfillment.

There are lot of controversies on how the phrase *kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|* should be rendered. Some postulate “has come or arrived” and some posit “has come/drawn near.” While others still prefer to refer to an eschatological tension, arguing that the context of 1:14-15 denote “arrival” and the Greek verb denote “nearness.” (Gundry 63-64) This apparent syntactical contradiction is intentional, pointing

to the fact that the kingdom of God has drawn near *spatially* (in Jesus' person) and *temporally* (since it ushers in the events of the eschaton). On the implications of the theology of God's kingdom, the Church must be alerted to the fact that the church in the here and now is to witness to the rule of God and to serve as the instrument and custodian of the kingdom. The implication of the kingdom theology also involves the ethics or lifestyle of the kingdom, a life that is meaningfully constructed on the initial experience of repentance and faith in Jesus.

There is a detection of an eschatological dualism in Jesus' inaugural message (Mk. 1:14-15). The contextual meaning suggests that the kingdom of God has arrived, while the Greek verb ἤγγικεν denote "nearness" or "at handedness" of the kingdom of God. Some scholars (like Ladd, Gundry and Guthrie) postulate that the strain of eschatological paradox inherent in the text is intentionally made by Jesus, to show that in his person the kingdom of God has arrived in time and space and yet awaits its full consummation at the eschaton (Ladd 206-217). This essay claims that the kingdom of God according to the Markan periscope in 1:14-15, has drawn near *spatially* (in Jesus' person) and *temporally* (since it ushers in the events of the end).

### Scholar's definitions of eschatology

Kittel (697) defines εσχάτος (eschatos) in its general sense as a word which depicts "last," and is used in the New Testament especially the Synoptics as referring either materially (Mt. 5:26; Luke 12:59) or in space (Acts 1:8; 13:47) or time (Mt. 12:45; 20:8ff; 27:64; Mk. 12:6, 22, Luke 11:26). Berkhoff (666) identifies the concept of eschatology as based on those passages of Scripture that speak of "the last days (Kai. pa,lin h;rxato dida,skein para. th.n qa,lassan\ kai. suna,getai proj auvto.n o;cloy plei/stoj| w[ste auvto.n eivj ploj/on evmba,nta kaqh/sqai evn th/| qala,ssh| | kai. pa/j o` o;cloy proj th.n qa,lassan evpi. th/j gh/j h=sanÅ), Is. 2:2; Mk. 4:1, "the last time" (proegnwsme,nou me.n pro. katabolh/j ko,smou fanerwqe,ntoj de. evpV evsca,tou tw/n cro,nwn diV u` ma/jj), I Pet. 1:20, and "the last hour" (Paidi,a( evsca,th w[ra evsti,n( kai. kaqwj hvkou,sate o[ti avnti,cristoj e;rcetai( kai. nu/n avnti,cristoi polloi. gego,nasin( o[qen ginw,skomen o[ti evsca,th w[ra evsti,nÅ), I Jn. 2:18. While it is true that these expressions sometime refer to the whole New Testament dispensation, even so they embody an eschatological idea. Drane (116), notes that eschatology is derived from εσχάτος and λογος and which means "ideas about the end." But not just concerned with

what might happen at the end of the world: it is essentially concerned with God's sovereignty, and with all the different means by which God's way of doing things can make themselves felt, whether in the lives of individual people, in society, or in the ultimate meaning of the entire cosmic process.

According to Cullman (78-79), eschatology is derived from the Greek Τα εσχάτα. The word "eschatology" and "eschatological" relate to the end time, not the time of decision. The "end time" in the New Testament is at one a future and a present. And should not be understood in an existential way, but in the temporal sense of "final time." Braaten (328) defines eschatology in its traditional sense as the doctrine of "the last things." It appeared as the final chapter in the classic system of dogmatics as under the heading *de novissimis* in Latin and Τα εσχάτα in Greek texts. Eschatology is no longer confined to the concluding chapter of dogmatics as teaching about the last things. The whole of Christian theology is penetrated by eschatology. Every theological statement is at once eschatology in the sense that eschatology deals with what is ultimate. Theology wholly and entirely eschatological.

A major divergence to the traditional definition of eschatology in its temporal sense is given by Rudolf Bultmann. For Bultmann (22), in the actual preaching of the prophets and of Jesus the "last" has a different meaning. As in the conception of heaven the transcendence of God is imagined by means of the category of space, so in the conception of the end of the world, the idea of the transcendence of God is imagined by means of the category of time. Bultmann believes that the traditional understanding of eschatology is mythological and therefore should be demythologized and understood existentially (Bultmann 35-36).

### The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus

The kingdom is called generally the kingdom of God, but sometimes the kingdom of heaven (literally the kingdom of the heavens). The latter form is confined to Matthew's Gospel, while elsewhere and a few times in Mathew the other form is used. Whereas there must have been a reason for Mathew's variation, there is no ground for supposing that he meant to denote anything different. In all probability 'heaven' was chosen as a periphrasis for God out of typical Jewish reverence for the divine name (Jeremias 97). It is just possible that Jesus himself varied his usage but this is less likely in view of the fact that Mathew alone preserves the form 'kingdom of heaven.' It seems reasonable to conclude that Mathew

made no distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God.

Several theological definitions of the expression, “the kingdom” has been given by scholars of varying theological persuasions. Caragounis (641) defines the kingdom of God or of heaven as signifying God’s sovereign, dynamic and eschatological rule. As proclaimed by Jesus, the kingdom of God had continuity with the Old Testament promise as well as with Jewish apocalyptic thinking but differed from them in important aspects, for instance, it denoted God’s eternal rule rather than an earthly kingdom, its scope was universal rather than limited to the Jewish nation. The expressions *kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|*, *poreuo,menoi de. khru,ssete le,gontej o[ti h;ggiken h` basilei,a tw/n ouvrnw/n and i` de. ui`oi. th/j basilei,aj evkblhgh,sontai eivj to. sko,toj to. evxw,teron\ evkei/ e;stai o` klauqmoj kai. o` brugmoj tw/n ovdo,ntwn* are used interchangeably in the Synoptic Gospels.

As signified by Stein (453), counting parallels the expression βασιλεια Του θεου occurs over eighty five times in the Synoptics. And it is to be understood as dynamic in nature and refers primarily to the rule or reign of a king. It is seldom used in a static sense to refer to a territory. As a result, in the vast majority of instances, it would be better to translate the expression “Kingdom of God” as the rule of God. That Jesus understood it this way is evident from such passages as Mt. 6:33 (“Seek first his kingdom”); and Mk. 10:15 (“receive the kingdom of God like a little child”). Gaffin Jr. (367-368) examines the theological concept of the Kingdom of God in its historical, dynamic, static, and temporal senses. According to him, the expression was taken over by Jesus from contemporary Judaism. Jesus gave it a sense radically at odds with the legalistic and nationalist conceptions that permeate the great variety of apocalyptic and rabbinic materials. There is no difference in reference between “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven” (cf. Mt. 4:17 with Mk. 1:15; Mt. 13:11 with Mk. 4:11 and Luke 8:10). Matthew almost always uses the latter (in distinction from Mark and Luke who never do), probably in view of the Jewish background of his audience for whom “heaven” was a reverent circumlocution for the divine name. *kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|* can have the dynamic meaning of “rule,” “reign,” “kingship”, as well as the concrete meaning of “realm,” “territory governed by a king,” “kingdom.”

Furthermore, the kingdom in the immediate future (cf. Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:15) is best understood as arriving in the

death and resurrection of Jesus. The kingdom present highlights the redemptive character of the kingdom and the eschatological power of the Spirit as the dynamic of the kingdom. These present and future dimensions cohere not as two or more kingdoms but as the one, eschatological kingdom arriving in successive stages or installments (Gaffin Jr. 368). Klappert (385) looks at *kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|* primarily from a futuristic perspective and puts that in order to understand Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God, it is best, in accordance with the apocalyptic, eschatological character of that proclamation, to start with those passages which deal with the coming of the kingdom of God in the near future. The future kingdom is coming in the form of a catastrophe (Luke 17:26; Mk. 13:26; 14:62), ushered in by the appearance of the Son of Man. Jesus thus aligned himself, not with the concept of an earthly, nationalistic messiah, but with the apocalyptic tradition in Judaism with its expectation of the Son of Man.

There are scholars who strongly insist that the best translation of *kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|* is “king-ship” or “sovereignty” (Jones 41; Richardson 84) or “rule of God” (Conzelmann 108). The assertion is based on the fact that the Aramaic equivalent *malkut* does not mean God’s kingdom, but the fact that God reigns. It is simply an abstract form of the sentence “God is King” and should be better translated as the “rule of God.” Moltmann, an exponent of political eschatology distinguishes between the lordship or rule of God and the kingdom of God. For him, anyone who stresses the *lordship of God* means the rule of God in the present. And anyone who stresses the *Kingdom of God* means the dimension and new order of all things according to God’s precepts, and is talking about the future of the kingdom (205)

A major radical divergence from the temporal sense of *kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairoj kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|* is provided by Rudolf Bultmann and his students including Kasemann and Conzelmann. Bultmann says:

*The Reign of God is a power which wholly determines the present although in itself it is entirely future. It determines the present in that it forces man to decision: he becomes one thing or the other, chosen or rejected, his entire present existence wholly determined by it. The coming of the kingdom of God is not therefore actually an event in the*

*course of time which will come within time and to which a man will be able to take up a position he is already revealed for what he is and he must therefore realize that the necessity for decision is the essential quality of his being. Because Jesus so sees man as standing in this crisis of decision before the activity of God, it is considerable that in him the Jewish expectation becomes the absolute certainty that now the hour of the breaking-in of the Reign of God has come. If man stands in the crisis of decision, and if this is the essential characteristic of his being as a man, then indeed every hour is the last hour, and it is understandable that for Jesus the whole contemporary mythology should be pressed into the service of this conception of human existence and that in the light of this he should understand and proclaim his hour as the last hour (51-52)*

Conzelmann (124-125) concurs with his mentor-theologian on the non-temporal existential significance of *kai. le.gwn o[ti pepih,rwtai o` kairo,j kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvaggeli,w|*: It is clear that the kingdom itself is not an imminent, spiritual entity. It is a fundamental fact that the account of the Last Things, which is far fuller than in the sources, corresponds to the increased emphasis on its transcendence. Here we see what is for Luke the typical parallel between sayings about the nature of the Kingdom, which have no reference to time, and sayings about temporal events. He has reached the goal of his apologetic: the kingdom has appeared in Christ, although its presence is not now immanent in the Church.

### **The Kingdom of God: the Basic Motif of Jesus' Teaching**

Most scholars agree that the dominant feature of Jesus' teaching is the kingdom of God. With this theme, Jesus began his preaching; it is the theme of his parables; it is the theme on his lips at the Last Supper. In the thought of the kingdom of God, he lives, and works, and dies (Hunter 13). The first three Gospels sum up Jesus' message in this concept, Mark in the summary verse 1:15 (*h;ggiken h` basilei,a*), placed at the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew and Luke in the phrases *khru,sswn to. euvagge,lion th/j basilei,aj* (Mt.4:23; 9:35) or *euvaggeli,sasqai, me dei/ th.n basilei,an tou/ qeou* (Luke 4:43; 8:1; cf. 9:2, 60).

Jeremias (96-97) observes that the formulations

above represent the central theme of the proclamation of Jesus from the frequency of the occurrence of *basilei,a|* in the Synoptic sayings of Jesus, which forms a striking contrast to the relatively sparse number of examples in contemporary Judaism and the rest of the New Testament. There is also the recurrence of the expression in a great variety of types of sayings and contexts. Numerous parables deal with the rule or reign of God, as do apocalyptic sayings (Mk. 9:47; Luke 17:20f), especially sayings about entry into the *basilei,a* (Mk. 10:23-25 par, etc) and the feast in the time of salvation (Mk. 14:25 par.; Mt. 8:11f par.), sayings about the nearness of the reign of God (Mk. 1:15 par.; 9:1par.; Mt. 11:12 par.; Mt. 11:12 par.; Luke 10:11), the conquest of its coming (Luke 11:2par.), admonitions (Mt. 6:33 par.; 19:12; Luke 9: 62), mission sayings (Mt. 10: 7par., Luke 10:9; 9:2, 60), and the sayings about the mystery of the *basilei,a|* (Mk. 4:11; cf. Luke 10:20 par. Mt 12:28).

Most scholars would not argue the declaration that Jesus had only one theme: the kingdom of God. And Jesus gave a name to His Gospel; "the Gospel of the Kingdom." He said "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43)."Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity" (Matthew 9:35). In Luke 6:20 while teaching the disciple on the plain he said blessed are ye poor for yours is the kingdom of God. Jesus attributed the occupation of the kingdom to the poor. He further said "And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

Most contemporary Christians do not recognize the fundamental significance of the kingdom of God motif to the Biblical message. Many people have been reading through Luke-Acts and have unconsciously filtered out the perspective of the kingdom. Arias citing a man who had read the Bible with "Church Growth eyes" and had filtered out the kingdom of God! In the synoptic gospels we have 122 direct references to the very phrases "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of Heaven." And ninety of these times the words are on Jesus' own lips. Then, what is the subject of Jesus' parables? Is it not "the kingdom of God"? What is the subject of the Sermon on the Mount, or of the Beatitudes, or of the Lord's Prayer? It is, of course, "the kingdom of God." Luke-Acts vividly points to the fact that the Kingdom proclamation is at the center of Jesus' mission though his disciples may have misunderstood the nature and the timing of the kingdom and they may have misunderstood the nature of their role in it, but they certainly knew that Jesus was about the

Reign of God. That is why some were asking for special status at its coming and some were hanging around and asking the same question even as the resurrected Lord prepared to leave His disciples: "Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Mark 10:35-45; Acts 1:6). The Devil itself knew what was in Jesus' mind immediately after His baptism; he took him to the pinnacle of the temple and showed him the glory of "the kingdoms of this world" as the appropriate strategy for bringing about the kingdom of God on earth. (Matthew 4:8-9) (Arias).

The fourth gospel recorded the confusion of the crowd and how they would have kidnapped him and made him a King by force (John 6:15). At some other times they accused him of pretending to be a king or making fun of Him for not acting as a king during His passion and crucifixion (Matthew 27:42). The religious leaders and the political authorities were accusing Jesus of subverting the nation and claiming to be a king (Luke 23:2). But all of them converged at one point: Jesus was about a kingdom!

Jesus' companions at the execution were also aware of that. One on the cross joined the multitude in scoffing: "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us" (Luke 23:39). The other thief, who was condemned together with Jesus, was having second thoughts about his own strategy for the kingdom and beginning to see the point of Jesus' strategy: "It is fair enough for us," he said in his agony, "but this man never did anything wrong in his life." He was moved to join Jesus on His way to the kingdom: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" and Jesus with compassion even at death opened wide the gates to the man, he said "I tell you truly, this very day you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:40-43). While commenting on the scene above Arias said:

*With His last breath, Jesus accepted this dying bandit who became the first-fruit of His proclamation of the kingdom. When the historical dimension of the Kingdom was clouded by suffering, apparent failure, and death, the good news of the eternal kingdom was shining through.*

The only theme which Jesus proclaimed to the end of his life and ministry is nothing else but the kingdom of God. This is the overwhelming evidence of the three synoptic gospels. Luke, in his second volumes the Acts of the Apostles, projects Jesus' kingdom ministry beyond the resurrection: "To the disciples Jesus presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:1-3). Here Jesus' message was the good news of

the kingdom. New Testament scholars, whether Protestant, Catholic, or Conservative Evangelical, after one century of scrutiny of the gospels and the teachings of Jesus, are of one accord about the dominant paradigm of the kingdom in Jesus' original message. Norman Perrin notes,

*"The central aspect of the teaching of Jesus was that concerning the kingdom of God. Of this there can be no doubt and today no scholar does, in fact, doubt it. Jesus appeared as one who proclaimed the kingdom; all else in his message and ministry serves a function in relation to that proclamation and derives its meaning from it. The challenge to discipleship, the ethical teaching, the disputes about oral tradition or ceremonial law, even the pronouncement of forgiveness of sins and the welcoming of the outcast in the name of God—all of these are to be so understood or they are not understood at all." (63-67)*

Of all of the descriptive titles that have been applied to Jesus through the centuries, the one that sums up his historical appearance best is the one whose currency owes so much to Bultmann: "Jesus is the Proclaimer of the Kingdom of God." J. D.G Dunn notes that "one would expect the kingdom of God to be the center of the evangelistic kerygma throughout the ages, and the original paradigm for preachers and evangelists." (254) How surprising it is to discover that this is not the case! If the kingdom of God was the climax of God's revelation as Jesus saw it, one might expect it to be the key to understanding God's mission, Jesus' mission, and the mission of the church, and, consequently, the decisive category for Christian theology. Arias laments;

*"How strange it is to discover that the kingdom of God as such is not a subject in the theological curricula nor a topic with its own chapter in what is called systematic theology. We have Christology, Pneumatology, Hamartiology, and Anthropology, but no one would dare suggest a Basilealogy! Of course, one may come across a reference to the kingdom of God paradigm in a course on the Teachings of Jesus or as part of the last chapter in a theology, namely, Eschatology." (Arias 7-9)*

## Theological Considerations on Eschatology

### Liberal Views

The liberal views of eschatology are well represented in

theological opinions of Adolf von Harnack and Albrecht Ritschl in the nineteenth century. According to Harnack whose thought represented the culmination of liberalism, Jesus emphasized the fatherhood of God, who has created all humans and who watches over and protects them, as he does all parts of his creation. The infinite value of a human soul was another major teaching of Jesus. God has made humans the highest object of his creation and his love, so we should love our fellow humans (Von Harnack 52-74).

The kingdom of God was another basic topic of Jesus' teaching. Whereas this kingdom had traditionally been understood as a future earthly reign of Christ that would be established by his dramatic Second Coming, liberals stressed the present character of the kingdom. They pointed out that Jesus had said to his disciples, "Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near you'" (Luke 10:8-9). The kingdom, then, is not something far removed, either spatially or temporally. It is something near, something into which humans can enter. It is not something external imposed from without. It is simply the reign of God in human hearts wherever obedience to God is found. The role of Christians is to spread this kingdom, which according to Ritschl (30-32), is a realm of righteousness and ethical values.

In the view of liberals, Jesus also taught some rather pre-scientific ideas. The teaching of the bodily Second Coming is merely the husk within which is contained the true message, the kernel. What must be done is to peel away the husk to get to the kernel (Harnack 55-56). The real message of the Second Coming is the victory of God's righteousness over evil in the world.

### Albert Schweitzer's Consistency Eschatology

Ben Witherington III (20) notes that according to Albert Schweitzer in his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of the Progress from Reimarus to Wrede (1906)*, the first quest had neglected or wrongly minimized, the eschatological and apocalyptic dimensions of Jesus' life, teachings and actions. Because there were not marginal or minor aspects of Jesus or his teachings, the result had been significant distortion rather than clarification of what the historical Jesus was like. Schweitzer's interpretation of Jesus' message was a reaction against the nineteenth century liberal non-eschatological interpretation of the Kingdom of God.

Schweitzer distinguished the eschatological school represented by Johannes Weiss and his followers on the

one hand and his own "thoroughgoing eschatology" on the other;

They related eschatology only to Jesus' preaching... rather than clarifying, in terms of the newly-won insights, the whole public ministry the events' connections and lack of connections ... it is quite inexplicable that the Eschatological School, given its insight into eschatology of Jesus' preaching of the reign of God, did not hit upon the thought of dogmatic element in Jesus' history as well (Geschichte 402, Quest 350f, quoted by Robinson 184). The decision does not lie [in Jesus' teaching] but rather in the investigation of the whole course of Jesus' life (Geschichte 269, Quest 257, quoted by Robinson 184).

Aulen (7) prefers the term "thoroughgoing apocalypticism" if eschatology seen existence under the aspect of eternity and has its goal set by God, so an apocalyptic eschatology lives in the certainty that "the end of time" is near and that the breakthrough of the "kingdom of God" in power and glory is immediately at hand. Schweitzer presented an apocalyptic Jesus (Witherington III 145, Aulen 7) who expected that the kingdom of God which he proclaimed would soon be realized, and who went to his death of his own free will, in order by that act of sacrifice both to hasten the arrival of the Kingdom and to shorten the aches and pains of "the end-time."

According to Schweitzer, repeatedly in the message of Jesus call for repentance and the summons to ethical change took as its ground the promise of the parousia: that the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of glory would soon put an end to human history and would usher in the new order of the Kingdom of God. Specifically, the moral teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, such as the command about turning the other cheek, came as the announcement of what his followers were to do in the brief interim between his earthly ministry and the end of history. "You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." "Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." But this generation did not live to see it all. Schweitzer then suggested that:

*The whole history of Christianity down to the present age, that is say, the real inner history of it, is based on the delay of the Parousia, the non-occurrence of the Parousia, the abandonment of eschatology, the progress and completion of the 'de-eschatologizing' of religion which has been connected therewith. It should be noted that the fulfilment of Matt. x23 is the first postponement of the Parousia. We have therefore here the first significant date in the history of Christianity; it gives*

*to the work of Jesus a new direction, otherwise in explicable (Schweitzer 352, quoted by Beasley-Murray 286, Pelikan 24).*

In a radical divergence from form criticism, Schweitzer believes that the apocalyptic Jesus was authentic and that the apocalyptic expressions which the evangelists placed in the mouth of Jesus in any case in all essential matters – were authentic (Aulen 8).

For Schweitzer, the eschatological saying of Matt. 10: 23 indicates that the disciples' mission would precipitate the final convulsions of this age: Jesus' purpose is to set in motion the eschatological development of history, to let loose the final woes, the confusion, and strife, from which shall issue the Parousia, and so to introduce the supra-mundane phase of the eschatological drama (Schweitzer 369, quoted by Beasley-Murray 286).

For Schweitzer, Jesus would have to give himself in death as atonement for the Kingdom to be realized – hence, the fatal trip to Jerusalem as an enactment of the woes of the tribulation (McKnight 163). He died a failure, but nonetheless as a testimony of which the will can achieve (McKnight 163). On the resurrection of Jesus, Schweitzer having come to the conclusion that Jesus was deluded, could only interpret the resurrection as Jesus having arisen within men, that is a completely non-supernatural view (Guthrie 381). Concerning the nature of Jesus' death, he maintains that Jesus had not actually died on the cross, but rather had only slipped into a coma-like state (Reymond 190).

### **Realized Eschatology of C. H. Dodd**

Dodd in his *The Parables of the Kingdom* (1935) and *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936) went to the other extreme of Schweitzer's consistent eschatology and contended that biblical eschatology has been realized, that Jesus did in fact bring in the kingdom of God. His ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and *Parousia* – a single complex event – constitute the actual presence of the kingdom. Jesus, according to Dodd, was not greatly concerned with the future. "Future eschatology" entered the New Testament as the result of the later Church reconstructing Jesus' scheme on the basis of Jewish apocalyptic literature when he did not immediately return (Reymond 983). Rather than predicting what was going to happen in some distant future, Jesus was introducing or inaugurating the kingdom of God then and there. Accordingly, eschatology does not deal with last things in any temporal sense. Rather, it is concerned with ultimate

things, things of ultimate significance. It concerns not the end of history but the "present of the eternal" in history. Apocalyptic language is only an ancient expression of this truth. The exegete needs to understand that resurrection, ascension, and second coming are three variant expressions of the same truth (Reymond 984).

### **Jurgen Moltmann's Political Eschatology**

The theology of hope considers eschatology not simply one part of theology, or one doctrine of theology, but rather the whole of theology (Erickson 1167). Aiming at realization of Christian hope, Moltmann has developed a political theology to transform the world. Though the future will not be mainly achieved by our word, it will basically be God's doing. To attain that hope requires praxis, not theological explanation of some sort. In contrast to earlier theologies, which attempted to deal with the problem of evil in the world by offering a theodicy, the theology of hope, instead of asking why God does not do something about evil in the world, acts to transform that evil.

Furthermore, for Moltmann (180) Christian eschatology is not just the doctrine of the so-called "last things" that will occur in the end, but it embraces both the object hoped for and the hope inspired by it. Christian eschatology also deals with political implications, such as social justice, world peace, and personal freedom and responsibility. Eschatology urges us toward political and economical liberation, human solidarity, solidarity with nature, and struggle for the realization of hope.

### **The Markan Theology of the Kingdom of God**

Matera (7) delineates a five-fold theological structure pertaining to the kingdom of God in the Lukan material. They are (i) the proclamation of the Gospel (ii) the Gospel of God as the in-breaking of God's rule (iii) the Gospel about Jesus Christ (iv) the community of disciples and the kingdom of God, and (v) the return of the Son of Man and the kingdom of God. For want of space and relevance to the present research work, the author will consider only three. They are treated as below.

#### **Markan Gospel as the Inbreaking of God's Rule**

The kingdom of God is a metaphor for God's rule over creation and history. When Jesus proclaims the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near, he

asserts two things (Matera 12-13). First, the long period during which humanity has waited for God to act in a final and decisive manner has ended. Second, God is now manifesting his rule over creation and history in a new and unparalleled way. The numerous healings and exorcisms that Jesus performs suggest that humanity has failed to submit to God's rule and that its history has gone astray, humanity has fallen under the power of Satan. The appearance of the kingdom of God discloses that humanity has been entrapped in a predicament from which it cannot extricate itself unless God manifests his rule in a new and decisive way. This is what God did through Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection.

Though the kingdom of God is a dynamic reality that refers to God's rule rather than to a space or location, Jesus portrays the kingdom as something into which one must strive to enter (9:47; 10:23-35). Each of these sayings is connected to a series of other sayings is connected to a series of other sayings that speak about entering into life or inheriting eternal life, thereby suggesting that entering into the kingdom means entering into life or inheriting eternal life.

A classical example of Jesus equating inheriting eternal life with entering into the kingdom of God is 10:17. In 10:17, a rich man asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. But when he leaves, unwilling to sell his possessions and follow Jesus (10:21-22). Jesus tells his disciples how hard it is for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God (10:23-25). The kingdom of God, then, is a realm into which disciples enter when they submit themselves to the rule of God.

The kingdom of God is the focus of Jesus' ministry, the purpose for which God sent him into the world. A dynamic reality that is already present in a hidden fashion during Jesus' ministry, it will be revealed in power at his resurrection and at the *Parousia* of the Son of Man. It must be proclaimed to all the nations, however, before Jesus returns. In the meantime, those who submit to God's rule are already entering into the realm of life (Matera 15).

### **Markan Kingdom of God and the Community of Disciples**

The manner in which the Markan Gospel portrays discipleship suggests that it undergirds the Church as a community of disciples who have embraced Jesus' message of the inbreaking kingdom of God (Matera 22). Because of his death and resurrection, the community now understands the mystery of the kingdom, the nature of discipleship, and the true identity of Jesus as the

crucified Messiah. For the Markan Gospel the Church is an eschatological community, that is, a community of disciples who know they are living in the last days before the appearance of the Son of Man. Therefore they must proclaim the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel about Jesus to all the nations before the Son of Man returns.

### **Eschatological *Parousia* in the Markan Gospel**

The relationship between what has "already" happened and what has "not yet" occurred is a central theme in the Markan Gospel that raises the question of eschatology. When the last events happen, God's victory will be complete, and the elect will be saved. According to Mark, these events will occur at the *Parousia* when the final stage of the Kingdom of God will be ushered in.

Although, the Markan Gospel never explicitly explains how the kingdom of God will come in power, it contains a number of sayings about the coming of the Son of Man that suggests that Jesus' *Parousia* is the eschatological event that effects God's final judgement or salvation. For instance, the coming of the Son of Man will be a moment of judgement for those who have been ashamed of Jesus and his words (8:38), a moment when he will be vindicated as the Son of Man who sits at God's right hand (14:62). It will be the moment when the Son of Man will send out the angels to gather the elect (13:26-27), presumably into the kingdom of God. Here, the *Parousia* will be the decisive moment of God's eschatological harvest, the moment when people will experience the fullness of salvation inaugurated by Jesus' ministry.

The expression *kingdom* occurs with a theological sense no fewer than seventeen times in the Gospel. Marshall (60-61) view the expression in several ways. (i) The kingdom is envisaged as something into which people may enter (Mt. 9:47; 10:23-25; cf. Mk. 14:25) and this realm appears to be the presence of God in a future state beyond death (ii) Thought of as something that is to come in the future (Mk. 9:1; 11:10; 15:43). The thought here is that somehow the future realm will become a reality here in this world, so that the kingdom as transcendent and the kingdom as future area ideas that merge into each other. Nevertheless, Jesus spoke that the kingdom has drawn near. This remarkable proclamation means that the kingdom promised for the future has already arrived or is about to arrive. The heavenly rule of God is becoming a reality here in this world. This is the heart of the Good News (iii) Said to belong to certain people (children and those like them) in the sense that they are destined to become part of it (Mk. 10:14) and to enjoy the privileges that it brings and (iv)

there is a secret about the kingdom that is shrewd with some people but not with others (Mk. 4:10-12). The secret is made known to those who understand the parables told by Jesus.

The eschatological tension in Mark is more between the kingdom as a realm into which people will enter and the kingdom as the dominion of God coming into being here in this world, whether in the near future or already in the time of Jesus. It is more a contrast between a transcendent spatial kingdom and an imminent dynamic kingdom that constitutes a space within this world in which God's blessings are realized (Marshall 79).

### Summary of Evidence for the Kingdom as Present in the Teaching of Jesus

Perrin (74-76) identifies five major proofs to show that the kingdom of God was realized in the teaching and ministry of Jesus:

(i) It is necessarily implied in the following parables, The hid treasures and the costly pearl (Mt. 13:44-46), the tower-builder and the king going to war (Luke 14:28-33), and the fig tree (Mk. 13:28 par.), the lamp under the bushel (Mk. 4:21 par.).

(ii) Jesus consistently speaks of himself and his work in eschatological imagery. In the reply to the question about fasting (Mk. 2:18-22 par.) the three pictures which Jesus uses of his work, wedding feast, new patches and old garments, new wine and old wineskins, all imply a claim tht the Messianic times had begun in his work, and his disciples do not fast because the old order in which fasting had its part has passed away.

Distinctively, eschatological figures used by Jesus of himself and his work are: the Shepherd (Mt. 9:36 par.; Mt. 10:6; 25:32; Mk. 14:27 par.; Luke 15:3-7; 12:32), the Husbandman who sends out his servants to reap the harvest (Mt. 9:37 f.; Luke 10:1f).

(iii) Jesus applies to himself and to his ministry Old Testament prophecies traditionally referred to the joys of the Messianic age. Luke 4:16-21 claims the fulfilment in the ministry of Jesus of Isa. 61:1f; Mt. 11:2-6 (cf. Luke 7:18-23) refers to the fulfilment in the work of Jesus of Isa. 35:5f.; 61:1.

(iv) Jesus speaks of his ministry in terms which necessarily imply that with it the Messianic times have begun. The blessedness of the disciples (Mt. 13:16f = Luke 10:23f) and the greater than Solomon or Jonah (Mt. 12:41f = Luke 11:31f), both imply this.

The gifts of God's forgiveness was the supreme gifts expected of the Messianic times. In Mk. 2:5 par. this gift is available in the present.

(v) The exorcisms of Jesus, and of his disciples, are a manifestation of the kingdom of God in the present. Mt. 12:28 = Luke 11:20 of the work of Christ. And Luke 10:18 of the work of his disciples.

### Exegesis of the Markan Pericope, 1:14-15

**Mark 1:14** Meta. de. to. paradoqh/nai to.n Vlwa,nnhn h=lqen o` Vlhsou/j eivj th.n Galilai,an khru,sswn to. euvagge,lion tou/ qeou/

**Mark 1:15** kai. le,gwn o[ti peplh,rwtai o` kairo,j kai. h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\ metanoiei/te kai. pisteu,ete evn tw/| euvagge,li,w|

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the gospel."

### Background to the Ministry of Jesus

According to Edwards (250), verse 14 and 15 represent a synopsis of Jesus and his message. V. 14 providing the historical setting and v. 15 its interpretation. Mark is able to summarize the whole of Jesus' life and teaching in a single concept, "the kingdom of God (1:15). It is significant that Jesus does not enter upon his own distinctive ministry until after John has been arrested. Mark's formulation suggests that Jesus is restrained by God from his ministry of proclamation until the Baptist is removed from the scene (Lane 63; Cranfield 62). His arrest indicates that the time has come for Jesus to act. Jesus enters into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God.

Mark says that Jesus came into Galilee. For the implication of that statement Stuart Blanch contrasts modern visitors' sense of peace and quiet in Galilee with the realities of the time of John the Baptist and Jesus:

Galilee was the centre of a humming political and commercial life. It stood at the crossroads of the nations of the ancient world, through which the armies and the traders and the diplomats passed. There in Galilee, some of the greatest battles of the world had been fought .... Galilee was the home of a thoroughly cosmopolitan population: Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic would all be heard in the markets; Syrian, Jew, Roman and Parthian mixed freely. It was a land of passing excitements and dangerous fashions, of a barbarous dialect and offensive

manner (31). English (45) commenting on Blanch argues that we must resist the temptation to picture the beginning of Jesus' ministry as being centered in some gentle, quite backwater (of the kind we have in our churches!). Jesus began at a place of conflict, threat, racial mixture and busy activity. Scholars have argued that what is meant by the *to. euvagge, lion tou/ qeou/* ("the gospel of God") is to be taken as a subjective genitive, the gospel that comes from God (Robertson 256). Others contend that it is to be vested with both subjective and objective genitival meanings (Wessel 624). As a subjective genitive, God is its source; as objective genitive, God is its object. It is the Gospel from God and about God. This is a balanced synthesis. The Gospel is the Good News, the very best news ever to come to the hearing of mankind, because it contains the message of forgiveness, restoration and new life in Christ Jesus.

Furthermore, what is meant by the *to. euvagge, lion tou/ qeou/* is defined by the summary of Jesus' proclamation in ch. 1:15; each element clarifies God's decisive action in sending forth his Son at his particular moment in history. The emphasis upon the fullness of time grounds Jesus' proclamation securely in the history of revelation and redemption. It focuses attention upon the God who acts whose past election and redemption of Israel provided the pledge of his activity in the future. Jesus declares that the critical moment has come. God begins to act in a new and decisive way, bringing his promise of ultimate redemption to the point of fulfillment (Lane 63). By the sovereign decision, God makes this point in time the critical one in which all the moments of promise and fulfillment in the past find their significance in one awesome moment. In comparison with John's preaching, the distinctive note sounded by Jesus is the emphasis upon fulfillment (Ridderbos 48).

### The Time is Fulfilled

The expression *eplh,rwtai o` kairoj* (literally "The time is fulfilled") is particularly significant for the interpretation of v. 15. It shows that all the centuries of preparation and prophecy are reaching their fulfillment. This is a time heavy with eternal significance (English 49). Time here is not simply chronological time (*Xpovoc*) but the decisive time (*kalpoc*) for God's action (Wessel 624). With the coming of Jesus, God was doing something special. "He marks the fulfillment of the special salvation – time which is distinguished from all other time" (Schweizer 45).

Furthermore, instead of announcing a period of time reaching its conclusion, Jesus announces the coming to pass of a decisive moment in time. The perfect tense

indicates that the event has come to pass now with lasting significance, and the passive voice indicates that God is at work in bringing it to pass (Guelich 43). It is God's appointed time that has come – the eschaton. According to Lane (64) *eplh,rwtai o` kairoj* indicates that the threshold of the great future has been reached, that the door has opened, and the prerequisites for the realization of the divine work of consummation are present, so that now the concluding drama can start. Owing to this, Jesus' initial proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom seems to speak of a more advanced point of time than that of John who had not yet mentioned the beginning of fulfillment.

### The Kingdom of God has Drawn Near

Now we come to perhaps the most crucial and *h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\* most controversial material of the text: *h;ggiken h` basilei,a tou/ qeou/\* (literally "the kingdom of God is at hand"). Lexically, Dodd (28-30) detects a common semitic term (*naga* – Hebrew; meta – Aramaic) behind the Greek *egglixiwv|u/* and *efqasen* (Mt. 12:28/Luke 11:20) in the LXX, and posited the meaning "has come" from the Semitic terms. Kummel (19-25), by contrast, concluded, after examining the New Testament use of *εγγυς* and *εγγιξειν*, that the terms constantly denoted "nearness" rather than "arrival."

According to Guelich (49), several have taken the context of 1:14-15 to denote "arrival" and a Greek verb which generally denotes "nearness" – an apparent syntactical contradiction. For instance, (Schnackenburg 141-143; Ambrozic 23; Beasley-Murray 73) have taken the tension as intentional and inherent in Jesus' proclamation of a kingdom with present and future dimension. Rather than referring exclusively to the present aspect of the kingdom (Dodd 28-35; Marxen 132-134), the *h;ggiken* of 1:15 maintains both the present but "hidden" fulfillment of the kingdom in Jesus' ministry, and the future consummation of the kingdom in power. This, the kingdom of God has "come into history," the appointed time "has been fulfilled" even though the full appearance is yet to come" (Guelich 44).

Lane (65) and Wessel (625) arrive at a similar conclusion with those who detect an eschatological tension in 1:15. According to them, the coming of the kingdom remains future, but it is certain precisely because God has begun to bring it to pass in the coming of his son. The announcement that the consummation is at hand affirms that the decisive events in its approach are under way. The Anointed One is already present among the covenant people, and through him the royal

act of God in redeeming his people has begun. The kingdom has drawn near, *spatially* in the person of Jesus who embodied the kingdom in a veiled way, and *temporally* because it is the only event which takes place prior to the end. In the person of Jesus men are confronted by the kingdom of God in its nearness. A faithful response to the proclamation of the Gospel is imperative.

### **The Imperative of the Gospel of God**

According to Lane (66), the summons to “repent” and believe” in the Gospel is not new, but a fresh reiteration of the word addressed to men through the prophets. But the note of urgency in the summons to repent is sharpened, for now the nature of the Gospel is clearer than ever before. The brief parable of the fig tree preserved by Mark in 13:28 echoes Jesus’ proclamation that the kingdom on *has come near* and clarifies why the nearness of the kingdom imposes radical demands upon men; “when the branch becomes tender and the leaves are about to sprout, you know that the summer *has come near*; i.e., the summer is the next thing that comes. Jesus action is confronting Satan, sin, disease and death, and subduing nature in the sign that the end stands as the next act of God in man’s future. Provision has been made for men to repent but there is not time for delay. Only through repentance can a man participate with joy in the kingdom when it does break forth. Jesus accordingly calls men to radical decision. In Jesus men are confronted by the word and act of God; he himself is the crucial term by which belief and unbelief come to fruition. Jesus proclaims the kingdom not to give content but convey a summons. He stands as God’s final word of address to man in man’s last hour. *Either* a man submits to the summons of God *or* he chooses this world and its pomp and riches.

### **What are the Implications of the Nearness of the Kingdom to the Church**

Here the author of this thesis will attempt to show how the kingdom theology has a bearing on the present existence of the Church. Some key areas will be explored including the Church and the redemptive kingdom of God and the ethics of the kingdom.

### **It is Redemptive**

Mathew 16:18-19 “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on

this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.” From this it might be inferred that the Church is a synonym for the kingdom. Indeed, Vos (150) argues that the imagery in this pericope is that the Church is a house built upon a rock foundation (v. 18) and the keys to the house will be turned over to Peter. Ladd, however, correctly maintains that this is pressing metaphorical language too far. Rather he argues, the kingdom is to be thought of as the reign of God (259-206). The Church, by contrast, is a realm of God, the people who are under his rule. The kingdom is the rule of God, whereas the Church is the redeemed human community under that rule (Ladd 260). Ladd gave four points on the relationship between the kingdom and the Church (109-117). They are given below:

### **The Church’s Mission is to Witness to the Kingdom**

The Church cannot build the kingdom or become the kingdom, but the Church witnesses to the kingdom – to God’s redeeming acts in Christ both present and future. This is illustrated by the commission Jesus gave to the Twelve (Mt. 10) and to the Seventy (Luke 10); and it is reinforced by the proclamation of the apostles in Acts.

The inclusion of the Gentiles as recipients of the kingdom is taught in the saying of the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 13:10; Mt. 24:14). Recent criticism has denied the authenticity of this saying (Mt. 24:14) or has interpreted it as an eschatological proclamation by angels by which a salvation of the Gentiles will be accomplished at the end (Jeremias 20-21). However, Cranfield points out that the verb *keryssein* (to preach, proclaim) in Mark always refers to a human ministry and that it is therefore far more probable that the word in Mk. 13:10 has its characteristic New Testament sense. It is part of God’s eschatological purpose that before the end, all nations should have the opportunity to hear the Gospel (Cranfield 399; Filson 254; and Beasley-Murray 154-196).

### **The Church is the Instrument of the Kingdom**

The charismatic significance of the Church is grounded on Mt. 16:18: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.” Cullmann (202) says “the Church will be stronger than death, and will rescue people from the dominion of Hades to the realm of life” is what Jesus means here. The Church has been empowered with various charismatic gifts to heal, perform miracles and drive out demons. As Jesus invaded history he exerted the authority and power of God over the dominant powers

of death in order to liberate humanity from the bondage of the devil.

### **The Church is the Custodian of the Kingdom**

The rabbinic concept of the kingdom of God conceived of Israel as the custodian of the kingdom. The kingdom of God was the rule of God that began on earth in Abraham, and was committed to Israel through the Law. Since the rule of God could be experienced only through the Law, and since Israel was the custodian of the kingdom of God. When Gentiles became Jewish proselytes and adopted by Law, they thereby took upon themselves the sovereignty of heaven, the kingdom of God. God's rule was mediated to the Gentiles through Israel; they alone were the "sons of the kingdom."

In Jesus the reign of God manifested itself in a new redemptive event, displaying in an unexpected way within history the powers of the eschatological kingdom. The nation as a whole rejected the proclamation of this divine event, but those who accepted it became the true children of the kingdom and entered into the enjoyment of its blessings and powers. The disciples of Jesus, his *ekklesia* now become the custodians of the kingdom rather than the nation of Israel. The kingdom is taken from Israel and given to others – Jesus' *ekklesia* (Mk. 12:9).

The disciples already exercised the authority of binding and loosing when they visited the cities of Israel, proclaiming the kingdom of God. Wherever they and their message were accepted, peace rested upon that house; but wherever they and their message were rejected, the judgment of God was sealed to that house (Mt. 10:14, 15). They were indeed instruments of the kingdom in effecting the forgiveness of sins; and by virtue of that fact, they were also the custodians of the kingdom. Their ministry had the actual result either of opening the door of the kingdom to men and women or of shutting it to those who spurned their message (Cullmann 205).

### **The Ethics of the Kingdom of God**

As noted by Ladd (124), Windisch in his book *The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount* makes distinction between historical and theological exegesis. For him historical exegesis must interpret the Sermon on the Mount strictly in terms of the Old Testament and Jewish categories and regard the kingdom as the "holy habitation of the Messianic salvation, etc.," i.e., the age to come. This is consistent eschatology; and in this light, Jesus'

ethics are rules to determine who will enter the eschatological kingdom. The historical interpretation has little relevance for the modern person, for he is no longer looking for an apocalyptic kingdom; and Jesus' eschatological ethics are really impractical and unfulfillable. Therefore the modern person must resort to the theological exegesis. Ladd (124) debunks this theory of Windisch as "arbitrary, obscuring the fundamental meaning of the kingdom." Wilder, like Windisch (Ladd 125) finds both eschatologically sanctioned ethics and non-eschatological ethics of the present time of salvation whose sanction is the pure will of God. Wilder differs from Windisch in indicating that the primary sanction is the will of God, while the eschatological sanction is merely formal and secondary.

But according to Ladd (126), the ethics of Jesus are the kingdom ethics, the ethics of the reign of God. It is true that most of Jesus' ethical maxims can be paralleled in Jewish teachings; but no collection of Jewish ethics makes the impact upon the reader that Jesus' ethics do. To read a message from the Mishnah is a different experience from reading the Sermon on the Mount. The unique element in Jesus' teaching is that in his person the kingdom of God has invaded human history, and people are not only placed under the ethical demand of the reign of God, but virtue of this very experience of God's reign are also enabled to realize a new measure of righteousness.

### **Absolute Ethics of the Kingdom**

This thesis presupposes the necessity of the ethics of the kingdom as absolute in the teaching of Jesus. The modern Church should find this a workable experience.

Dibelius (51-52) posits that Jesus taught the pure, unconditioned will of God without compromise of any sort, which God lays upon human beings at all times and for all time. Such conduct is actually attainable only in the age to come when all evil has been banished; but it is quite clear from the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus expected his disciples to practice his teachings in this present age. Otherwise, the sayings about the light of the world and the salt of the earth are meaningless (Mt. 5:13-14). Jesus' ethics embody the standard of righteousness that a holy God must demand of men and women in any age.

Ladd (127) draws an analogy between the manifestation of the kingdom of God itself and the attainment of the righteousness of the kingdom. The kingdom has come in Jesus in fulfillment of the Messianic

salvation within the old age, but the consummation awaits the age to come. The kingdom is actually present but in a new and unexpected way. It has entered history without transforming history. It has come into his society without purifying society. By analogy, the righteousness of the reign of God can be actually and substantially experienced even in the present age; but the perfect righteousness of the kingdom like the kingdom itself, awaits the eschatological consummation. Even as the kingdom has invaded the evil age to bring to people in advance a partial but real experience of the blessings of the eschatological kingdom, so is the righteousness of the kingdom attainable, in part if not in perfection, in the present order. Ethics, like the kingdom itself, stands in the tension between present realization and future eschatological perfection.

### Ethics of Inner Life

According to Ladd (128) Wilder summarizes Jesus' teaching as demanding "no anger, no desire to retaliate, no hatred, that hearts must be wholly pure." Anger, desire, hatred belong to the sphere, of the inner person and the intention that motivates his or her deeds. The primary demand of Jesus is for righteous character. This demand appears elsewhere in Jesus' teachings. Those who are good, out of the good treasure of their hearts produce good, and those who are evil out of their evil treasure produce evil. Conduct is a manifestation of character (Luke 6:4-5). Thus the essential righteousness of the kingdom, since it is a righteousness of the heart, is actually attainable, qualitatively if not quantitatively. In its fullness, it awaits the coming of the eschatological kingdom; but in essence it can be realized here and now; in this age.

### CONCLUSION

The research has been conducted within the framework of a historical-critical and exegetical analysis. This methodology is the suitable methodology that is capable of exploring the depth of the authorial intention. The whole study has justified the thesis statement which serves as the conceptual framework: *That the Kingdom of God, according to the Markan periscope, 1:14-15, has drawn near spatially (in Jesus' person) and temporally (since it ushers in the events of the Eschaton)*. The eschatological proclamation of the kingdom in the teaching of Jesus stresses both the present realization and the nearness of that kingdom in the *Parousia*.

The research concludes with validating the presence of a tension in the Markan unit of 1:14-15. The kingdom of God "has come" into history, the appointed time "has been fulfilled", even though its full consummation is yet to come. The preaching of the rule of God is the proclamation of the Good News which sets men free from Satan and sin. The message in 1:15 consists of two declarative and two imperative statements, each pair set in synthetic parallelism.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since eschatology is the principal motif of Jesus' preaching in the Synoptic tradition, scholars and preachers should all the more devote their mental and spiritual energies toward the proclamation of the kingdom of God.
2. Christian preachers should thoroughly emphasize the present realization of the kingdom of God in the sense of righteousness, peace, joy and the charismatic manifestation of God's power over Satan, sin, and the world system.
3. The final consummation of the kingdom is the ultimate purpose of eschatology, and therefore the Christian preachers and believers should always anticipate the *Parousia*. In view of this, the Christian will earnestly be alert and watch for the eschatological return of Christ.
4. Eschatology views God as the God of the *eschaton* who guides history to its appointed destiny. Christian preachers should proclaim God as the Alpha and Omega who governs time, who will wisely consummate history to fulfill his overall redemptive purpose for humanity.
5. Finally, in the *kerygmatic* proclamation of the kingdom of God; the redemptive purpose of God is brought to the fore. The advancement of the kingdom correlates with the progress of God's redemptive purpose for humanity.

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