

Hope of the Coming Kingdom of God.

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Now we turn to systematise the results of biblical studies, we must not cease to keep our eyes on two facts. The first is: The Scripture tells about the things of the Kingdom of God also in those passages, where this phrase is not used. We were certainly wrong to seek deep differences between the Synoptics and the other books, or between the teaching of Jesus and the apostles only because there are differences between this and that use of words. The exegesis which looks beyond the use of words shows us clearly that the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel supposes and affirms the teaching of the Kingdom of God.. The other fact is that the idea of Kingdom of God occupies greater territory in the modern thought than we generally suppose so. I refer only to the discussions and searchings, which took place inside the Ecumenical Movements in the decade of 1920-30. It was clear from the beginning that beyond the differences in the outlooks of mission work or revolutionary and evolutional ideas outside or inside the church the different concept of Kingdom of God stood. We must keep our attention to this on one hand in order not to be misunderstood with our witness of our hope in the coming Kingdom of God and on the other hand that we should listen to the Gospel of God's Kingdom and forward it correctly.

Taking these into consideration we are going to deal with the coming Kingdom and after that we shall speak about the Hope of the Kingdom which has come, watching always the fact, that the theme of the next two lectures make one wholeness only together.

1. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom to come. We bear witness of this when we pray in the Lord's prayer: Thy Kingdom come! We pray for its coming because it is not here yet. The NT speaks about the coming Kingdom always when it proclaims the Kingdom of God./even Luke 17:20/. There is no doubt that according to the Scripture God is the Lord and King of the whole world already now but at the same time it is true that the OT as well as the NT expects for the mighty and decisive action of God in the future, that will realise His Kingdom in the full sense of the word. a./ The Church must learn something first of all from this. She cannot live in arrogance and cannot stay before the world claiming that she is able to realise the Kingdom of God here and now by her Word, sacraments and spiritual gifts given by God. The Kingdom of God is a coming Kingdom: It is not here even in the Church. God's gifts: the Word, the Baptism, the Holy Communion, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given only for the coming Kingdom and all of them refer to it. They are orientated toward the Kingdom of God itself. / The Church is always pointing to the coming of the Kingdom of God. Translator./

b./ Concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God we have to neglect any kind of "time-speculations". The Holy Scripture tells about this in such a simple way as we use to talk about the coming events. It speaks of the coming of the Kingdom of God as one, real event but it does not ^{speculate} ponder over the time and timelessness, the relation of the "transient" /finite/ and infinity. These speculations do not want to pay attentions to the Kingdom of God, on the contrary they drive it away. Similarly it is not correct to speak about the Kingdom of God that is always coming. Sermons adressed in Advent prayers, hymns make this mistake very often. The Kingdom of

God comes only once but that time once for all.

1. We must take it seriously, that we do not know the time when the Kingdom of God arrives. The Scripture calls our attention to this from time to time. Two parables - staying together in the Gospel: the servants who do expect their master and the wise and foolish maidens - point at the same time to the possibility His coming will be late and on the other hand He comes sooner than we would think of. The Church which expects for the Kingdom of God must watch awake under the possibilities of "this day" and "one day is as a thousand years" with the Lord. /The Church must not ignore this fact./

It is clear that our Lord Jesus Christ gave the second question /in the Lord's prayer/ to the disciples in order to keep them in such a watchfulness. No doubt the Christianity of the apostolic age took this seriously. We have to confess there is a great and painful difference between the church of the apostolic age and our age. We generally do not take seriously the hope that the Kingdom of God will come.

2. The coming of the Kingdom of God means a beginning of a new world, God works this with a great action like the creation was and by this action He not only restores the creation which was crashed in the sin but carries it to the complete fulfilment. The Scripture hardly satisfies the curiosity concerning the new world. To satisfy this curiosity is characteristic to the false hope of the apocaliptics. The NT. uses the simile of the heavenly "banquet" /feast/ or the heavenly worship, both of them are convenient for expressing of oneness with God and the complete fulfilment. The new world will not oppose God. /The true hope is interested first of all in the relation with God/.

We must make two notes to our second main thesis:

a./ The beginning of a new world the coming of the Kingdom of God means at the same time an end of an old one. This world cannot be transformed by any changes, progresses, evolutions to the new one at all. God on the treshhold of his Kingdom will judge this world. All hopes are false that avoid the fact of God's judgement concerning either believers or unbelievers. There is no exception. Even the church is not an exception. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not ceased to call our attention to the fact that there would be many among the pious whose false hope should be ashamed.

b./ The creation of this new world belongs to God. Therefore we cannot make the Coming of His Kingdom to be fast or to be late. It is God himself who realises His Kingdom and He himself carries it out. All hopes and expectations are false which think of either the world itself or the church with her God's given gifts is able to realise the Kingdom of God. Even the believers need to be created anew to go into the Kingdom of God. For this Christ gives us the second question /in the Lord's prayer/ to ask God for realisation of His Kingdom.

3./ The coming Kingdom of God can be a hope & a good hope - for us and for the world only because there is a Gospel of the Kingdom of God and it tells us that God took pity on the world and did not bring His Kingdom without preparation. God made over His Kingdom to His Son and He came before He will come to judge: this is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Now I shall try to set this in proper light: /to elucidate/

a./ The Gospel of the Kingdom of God proclaims us a postponement or a "moratorium". God decided His Kingdom to come but he still waits with his coming that his coming

should not be only judgement and a destruction. Christ speaks about this in the parable of figtree. The fact that his Kingdom has not come yet speaks about God's hope: God has hopes of the world. He looks on the world with hope. /If we take this hope as ours this hope will not be ashamed./
b./ God in the Gospel of His Kingdom comes near to us. The Kingdom of God proclaims the moratorium urgently. God's forgiving grace prompts us to repentance. All hopes are false which neglect the demand of repentance. It is impossible to hope in God without turning back from our own way. Therefore all hopes of ours are quite empty if our whole life is not adapted to the Kingdom of God. God proclaims us the coming of His Kingdom that we may seek and live the righteousness of His Kingdom. The sons of the Kingdom, and therefore the sons of the hope are only these who ~~believe~~ behave themselves as sojourners and strangers in this world. Christ gives the second question /in the Lord's prayer/ to us that we may adapt ourselves to the coming Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is a coming Kingdom, therefore its King has come already. This is the order from God's point of view. The King has come and ~~is~~ born us again by his resurrection for living hope of the coming Kingdom. This is the order from our point of view.

The next lecture looks at this question from this side.