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THE CONCEPT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of New Testament Exegesis

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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May 1949

Approved by

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Introduction

In the English language the word "kingdom" is used in many different senses. It is used in the concrete sense of a realm or territory over which a king rules. This sense is the predominant meaning in the popular usage of the word. It is also used to denote the three large divisions of all natural objects namely, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and the mineral kingdom. This word also has a very abstract meaning in certain usage of the word. In such usage it means "the rank, state, or attributes of a thing, royal authority." In a theological sense, the apostle Paul's Kingdom of God which he meant "The spiritual realm over which God is the Lord."

However, the English word "kingdom" with all its connotations does not convey the exact meaning of the Greek word βασιλεία. How accurate will such English

1. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1909 edition) p. 1001.

THE CONCEPT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

Introduction

In the English language the word "kingdom" is used in many different ways. It is used in the concrete sense of a realm or a territory over which a king rules. This seems to be the predominant meaning in the popular usage of the word. It is also used to denote the three large divisions of all natural objects: namely, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and the mineral kingdom. This word also has a very abstract meaning in Archaic usage of the word. In such usage it meant "the rank, state, or attributes of a king; royal authority." In a theological sense, The Webster's Collegiate Dictionary states that it means: "The spiritual realm having God as its head."¹

However, the English word "kingdom" with all its ramifications does not convey the exact meaning of the Greek word basileia. Some scholars hold that basileia

1. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Fifth edition of 1943).

is the Greek translation of the Aramaic maluk, which means primarily a "kingly-rule" or "sovereignty".²

Unlike the English concept it includes the idea of reign. Many scholars hold that at the basis of the concept of basileia lies the idea of the Old Testament theocracy, in which God ruled over His people. This particular concept of the theocracy of the Old Testament is brought to the surface in I Samuel 8,7: "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."³

In Jewish literature outside the New Testament the phrase "the kingdom of God" is usually used in an intensive or abstract sense and never in an extensive or concrete sense, which in such a case would include the group, realm, or territory over which God reigns. But, be that as it may, frequently in the New Testament it has the extensive connotation.⁴

Thayer holds a somewhat similar view. He lists three meanings for basileia: "(1) royal power, kingship, dominion, rule; (2) a kingdom, i.e. the territory subject to the rule of a king; (3) the kingdom over which God rules." In this

2. Archibald Hunter, The Message of the New Testament, p. 54.

3. The Catholic Encyclopedia, See "The Kingdom of God".

4. Cecil John Cadoux, The Historic Mission of Jesus, p. 113.

connection he also states:

Jesus employed the phrase "kingdom of God" or "of heaven" to indicate that perfect order of things which he was about to establish, in which all those of every nation who should believe in him were to be gathered together into one society, dedicated and intimately united to God, and made partakers of eternal salvation. This kingdom is spoken of as now begun and actually present, inasmuch as its foundations have already been laid by Christ and its benefits realized among men that believe in him.... But far more frequently the kingdom of heaven is spoken of as a future blessing, since its consummate establishment is to be looked for on Christ's solemn return from the skies, the dead being called to life again, the ills and wrongs which burden the present state of things being done away, the powers hostile to God being vanquished....⁵

Moulton and Milligan, on the other hand stress Thayer's primary meaning of basileia:

As "kingship" or "sovereignty" in the abstract is necessarily the root meaning of this word, it is easy to see how the passage into the concrete could be on the lines of our "dominion" (... or follow the outward and visible "sign of royalty").... It is possible that some passages in the N T might gain in force if this last meaning "a sign of royalty" were substituted for "royalty" in the abstract....⁶

Kittel carries the idea a little further. He maintains that basileia means primarily the nature, essence, and state of the king with the concept of royalty, lordship, and sovereign authority chiefly in the foreground. When it is used in connection with a king, it means majesty

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5. Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament, see basileia.
 6. James Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 104.

and power, which shows itself in the realm over which he reigns.⁷

Continuing in the same vein of thought, W. E. Vine gives the meaning of basileia clearly and concisely: "(It) is primarily an abstract noun, denoting sovereignty, royal power, dominion... then by metonymy, a concrete noun, denoting the territory of people over whom a king rules...."⁸

The Reverend R. T. Du Brau, on the other hand, leans quite heavily on the idea of reign:

It is a designation of both the power and the form of a king's government, and with later writers it includes the territory of the royal rule. The word has remained basileia in modern Greek. Here, then, was a made-to-order term for Christianity to apply to the reign of their own King of Kings, to the rule of God in the world and in the hearts of men; past, present, and future.⁹

J. Schaller states that basileia is God's gracious ruling through the Gospel. The kingdom of God in a proper sense does not denote a bare condition, but it is an uninterrupted activity, a continual governing and work of God. To speak of the kingdom of God as a place to which someone enters, is misleading. However, in such a sense it is never something material and external, but it always

7. Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, pp. 574-580.
8. W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, vol.II, p.294.
9. R. T. Du Brau, "Lexical Notes on the 'Kingdom' ", Concordia Theological Monthly, vol.XIX, no.10, pp. 777-784.

denotes just a gift, which is mediated to us through the Gospel.¹⁰

Dr. F. E. Mayer's view is very similar to that of J. Schaller. Dr. Mayer also stresses the idea of reign and bases this on the fact that basileia is a verbal noun. In his essay entitled, "The Kingdom of God According to the New Testament", he propounds four theses:

(1) The terms "kingdom of God", "kingdom of heaven", "kingdom", and related concepts denote primarily God's continuous activity, more specifically the rule of God.... (2) The kingdom of God according to the New Testament is God's gracious activity for the salvation of men.... (3) The kingdom is God's ruling activity established in the heart of believers by God Himself through the preaching of the Gospel.... (4) The kingdom of God and of Christ is established in all its essential features even now....¹¹

These are the various meaning of basileia, but of special interest to us here is to try to determine Paul's concept of the kingdom of God. Did Paul think of the kingdom of God as a realm, or as God's reigning, or both? Did Paul think of it as present, or future, or both?

In trying to establish Paul's concept of the kingdom of God, we shall first translate the passages where this

10. J. Schaller, "Das Reich Gottes", Theologische Quartalschrift, vol.XV (1918), pp.84-86.

11. Dr. F. E. Mayer, "The Kingdom of God According to the New Testament", Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Convention of the Texas District of Ev. Luth. Synod of Mo., O., and Other States, 1942, pp.16 ff.

phrase occurs in Paul's epistles and arrange them in chronological order. Secondly, we shall study the exegesis of these passages. In the third place, we shall classify these passages according to the different names of the "kingdom", according to whether the predominant meaning is reign or realm, and according to time. And finally we shall summarize the results of our investigation by presenting Paul's concept of the kingdom of God.

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I

Translation of the Passages from Paul's Epistles
in Which the Word Basileia Occurs

Galatians 5, 16-21: But I say, walk by the Spirit and do not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these things are opposite to each other, so that you might not do the things which you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. But the works of the flesh are evident, such as are fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, factions, divisions, dissensions, envies, spleens, carousings, and things like these, concerning which I tell you beforehand, as I said before, that they who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.¹²

I Thessalonians 2, 9-12: For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; night and day we worked, so that we might not burden you, while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses and so is God, how holily and justly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers, as

12. Moffatt translates, "I tell you beforehand as I have told you already, that people who indulge in such practices will never inherit the Realm of God."
 Goodspeed translates, "(They) will have no share in the Kingdom of God."

you know, how we exhorted, consoled, and charged every one of you, as a father treats his children, that you walk worthily of God, who is calling you into His own kingdom and glory.¹³

II Thessalonians 1, 3-5: We are obliged to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, even as it is meet, because your faith is growing exceedingly and the love of each single one of you increases toward one another, so that we boast about you in the churches of God with respect to your perseverance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which you endure, an indication of the righteous judgment of God, so that you might be worthy of the kingdom of God, in behalf of which you also suffer.¹⁴

Ephesians 5, 1-5: Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as also Christ loved us and gave Himself for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice

13. Moffatt translates, "(We were) beseeching you, encouraging you, and charging you to lead a life worthy of God who called you to his own realm and glory." Lenski translates, "that you walk worthily of God, the One calling you into his own Kingdom and glory." Goodspeed translates, "who invites you into his kingdom and glory."

14. Goodspeed translates, "This is proof of God's justice in judging, and it is to prove you worthy of the Kingdom of God."

Moffatt translates, "These are proof positive of God's equity; you are suffering for the realm of God, and he means to make you worthy of it...."

to God.

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as is fitting to the saints, also filthiness and foolish talking or scurrility, which is not fitting, but rather let there be giving of thanks. For this you know, realizing that every fornicator, or unclean person, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.¹⁵

Colossians 1, 9-14: For this reason also we, from the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord (with a desire) to please Him in all things bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious power, for all endurance and longsuffering, with joy giving thanks to the Father who made us fit to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light, who rescued us from the power of the Darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have the

15. Goodspeed translates, "(No such person) can have any share in the Kingdom of Christ and God."
Moffatt translates, "Be sure of this, that no one guilty of sexual vice or impurity or lust (that is, an idolater) possesses any inheritance in the realm of Christ and God."

redemption; the forgiveness of sins.¹⁶

Colossians 4, 10-11: Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, (concerning whom you have received instruction, if he comes to you, receive him), and Jesus who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision, these alone are my co-workers for the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort to me.¹⁷

I Corinthians 4, 18-21: Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God

16. Moffatt translates, "(We are) thanking the Father who has qualified us to share the lot of the saints in the Light, rescuing us from the power of the Darkness and transferring us to the realm of his beloved Son!"

Lenski translates, "He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us into the realm of his dear Son."

17. The Revised Standard Version translates, "These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God...."

Moffatt translates, "These are the only comrades in the work of God's realm, belonging to the circumcised, who have been any comfort to me."

Goodspeed translates, "(These) have worked with me for the reign of God."

Lenski translates, "And Jesus, the one called Justus,-- they being of the circumcision these alone, fellow workers for the Kingdom of God of a kind that have come to be a consolation for me."

does not consist in talk but in power. What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?¹⁸

I Corinthians 6, 9-11: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, (nor catamites), nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were consecrated (sanctified), you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.¹⁹

I Corinthians 15, 20-28: But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by a man came death, also through a man the resurrection of the dead. For just as in Adam all die,

18. Taken from the Revised Standard Version.
Moffatt translates, "God's Reign does not show itself in talk but in power."
Lanski translates, "For not in connection with (mere) word is the kingdom of God, on the contrary, in connection with power."

Goodspeed translates, "For the reign of God is not a matter of words but of power."

19. Taken from the Revised Standard Version.
Moffatt here translates basileia tou theou, "the Realm of God."

Goodspeed translates, "(They) will not have any share in God's kingdom."

so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, when He shall abolish all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. "For He placed all things in subjection under His feet." But when it says that all things have been put in subjection, it is clear that He is excepted who placed all things into subjection under Him. But when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to Him who placed all things into subjection under Him, that God might be all in all.²⁰

I Corinthians 15, 42-50: So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption and raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But not the spiritual but

20. Moffatt translates, "Then comes the end, when he hands over his royal power to God the Father, after putting down all other rules, all other authorities and powers."

Goodspeed translates, "After that will come the end when he will turn over the kingdom to God his Father...."

the physical is first; and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, made of the earth; the second from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.²¹

Romans 14, 13-19: Then let us no longer judge one another, but rather decide this, not to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in a brother's way. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks that something is unclean, to him it is unclean. For if on account of eating, your brother is offended, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not with your eating destroy him for whom Christ died. Therefore, do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not (does not consist in the act

21. Verses 48-50 are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

Moffatt translates, "I tell you this, my brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the Realm of God, nor can the perishing inherit the imperishable."

Lenski translates, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood are unable to inherit God's kingdom, neither does corruption inherit incorruption."

Goodspeed translates, "Flesh and blood cannot share in the Kingdom of God."

of) eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he who serves Christ in this is well-pleasing to God and is approved to men. Therefore, let us pursue that which makes for peace and the mutual edification of each other.²²

II Timothy 4,1-2: I charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, both by His appearance and His kingdom, speak the Word, be ready (to preach) in season and out of season, reprehend, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering and patience.²³

22. Moffatt translates, "The Reign of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, it means righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit."

Goodspeed translates, "The Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of righteousness, peace, and happiness through the possession of the holy Spirit."

The Revised Standard Version translates, "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

23. The Revised Standard Version translates, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching."

Lenski translates, "I am earnestly testifying in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus the one about to judge the living and dead, both by his epiphany and by his kingdom: Herald the word; stand at hand in good season, in no season, convict, chide, admonish, in all longsuffering and doctrine!"

Moffatt translates, "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead in the light of his appearance and his reign... never lose patience with them and never give up your teaching."

II Timothy 4, 16-18: At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the Word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.²⁴

Goodspeed translates, "I charge you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom... exhort people, with perfect patience and willingness to teach."

24. Lenski translates, "(The Lord will rescue me) for his Kingdom, the heavenly one...."

Moffatt translates, "The Lord will rescue me from every assault of evil, He will bring me safe to His own realm in heaven."

II

Exegesis of the Passages from Paul's Epistles
in Which the Word Basileia Occurs

Galatians 5, 16-21

Paul points out in chapters three and four that the ceremonial law is not binding. People are saved not by works but by faith. And now in chapters five and six he shows that the Christians should not abuse their liberty. In chapter five he tells them that they are free but they should not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another (verse 13). In verses sixteen and twenty-four the Apostle continues to speak of love and shows the source of Christian love, the negative side or lack of Christian love, and the signs of love in daily life.

In this connection, in verse sixteen, he states that they should walk in the Spirit. Peripateite is a present imperative to emphasize the point that they should continue to walk in the Spirit.²⁵

"In the Spirit" is best taken as the Fulpit Commentary suggests, namely, "the rule according to which, together with the enabling power by which, our daily behaviour is to

25. R.C.H.Lenski, The Interpretation of Galatians, pp. 280 ff.

be regulated."²⁶ Cf. Acts 21, 21; II Cor. 12, 18.

"And you shall not carry out to completion the desires of the flesh," expresses result. "Walking by the Spirit," is the means by which one has victory over the flesh.

"For the flesh desires against the spirit." "For" shows "the reason why walking by the Spirit will exclude fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; viz., their mutual contrariety."²⁷

Pneuma is best explained as referring to the Holy Ghost in verses sixteen and eighteen and as referring to the new spiritual life in verse seventeen.²⁸

The new spiritual life, or the new man, is constantly being opposed by the sinful flesh, or the old Adam, so that there is an internal conflict such as Paul describes in Romans 7, 15-23, and so that one does not do the things which one desires to do. In this case the hina clause is best taken as a result clause.²⁹

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." Meyer explains this verse thus: "Through the impelling power of the Spirit you find yourselves in such a moral condition of life that the law has no power to find

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26. Prebendary E. Huxtable, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 46, pp. 251-263.
 27. International Critical Commentary (ad locum), pp. 393 ff.
 28. L. Fuerbringer, Galatians (mimeographed notes), pg. 65.
 29. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit., pp. 280 ff.

fault with you, to condemn and punish you."⁵⁰

In verse nineteen Paul shows conversely what belongs to being led by the Spirit. "Evident are the works of the flesh." Phanera is in emphatic position to emphasize the fact that these things are so conspicuous that they cannot be denied. "The works of the flesh" are those evil works which occur when the flesh is the actuating principle and the flesh, and not the Spirit, leads us.³¹

"Of which kind are," Hatina is qualitative and shows that Paul is not listing all of the sins which show the lack of Christian love. These sins are: fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness; idolatry, sorcery; enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, factions, divisions, dissensions, envies; spees, carousings.

"Concerning which I tell you beforehand, as I said before, that they who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Huxtable states that Paul is here referring to the kingdom as future because "the pro in prolego, as also in the proeipon which follows, has reference to the time when it shall actually be proved who are to enter into the kingdom of God" and because "the present tense of prassontes is more suitable than the aorist, as being the language of warning with reference to future

50. Lange-Schaff Commentary (ad locum), pp. 136-140.

31. Ibid.

conduct."³²

Very much in agreement with this, the International Critical Commentary holds that Paul is here referring to God's future reign. It also states that since basileia is anarthrous, it is qualitative and "emphasizes the ethical quality of the order of things for which the phrase stands and the incongruity between it and hoi ta toiauta prassontes...."³³

Both of the above commentators hold that basileia means the future kingdom, but Lenski disagrees. He holds that Paul uses "inherit" here in the same sense that he has used it in previous chapters, namely, that now already the believers have actual possession of the kingdom and enjoy it. Gal. 4, 1. He also states that the future, kleeronomieousin, simply means that those who do such things shall never possess the kingdom. Furthermore, he maintains that the heirs of the kingdom do not merely enjoy the kingdom, but they actually rule now already. "The kingdom is composed of nothing but kings."³⁴

Thayer, on the other hand, states that kleeronomieoo is used of inheriting Canaan. (Cf. Lev. 20, 24; Deut. 4, 22. 26; 6, 1.) But after the Israelites took possession of Canaan, they were harassed by their enemies and even driven

32. P. E. Huxtable, Op. Cit., pp. 251-263.

33. International Critical Commentary, pp. 393 ff.

34. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit., pp. 280 ff.

out. Then the people began to transfer the usage of the phrase to denote the tranquil and stable possession of a holy land crowned with blessings, that is, the heavenly Canaan, Matt. 5, 5: "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth (land)."³⁵

Although Lenski's explanation appears very plausible, yet it seems that Paul is speaking of the future kingdom. There seems to be no reason that the future should not be taken as a real future referring to Judgment Day. In that case this verse would mean that as long as a person does such things, he cannot inherit the kingdom. In the second place, this passage seems to be a parallel to Matthew 25, 34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The problem in this case would be that Matthew was written between 50 and 60 A. D. whereas Galatians was probably written in 48 A. D. But it is highly possible that this expression was popular among the Christians of that time. In the third place, it almost seems that Jesus uses gees in Matthew 5, 5 as a synonym of basileia.

Duncan holds that basileia in this instance means

35. Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament, see klecronomeeo.

realm³⁶, but the idea of reign cannot be excluded. Bousset holds that the Christians shall inherit the sovereign authority and be co-regents with Christ.³⁷ Cf. II Tim. 2, 12.

To conclude, our opinion is that Paul is here speaking of a kingdom which is to be inherited in the future. The word basileia may here be used in the sense of "reign", and the meaning is that those who lead a life of sin as depicted will not join in the happy reign or dominion of Christ to which His loyal followers are looking forward.

I Thessalonians 2, 9-12

In the first two chapters of I Thessalonians, Paul is comforting the Christians and he mentions his deep concern for them. To be more specific in showing this to them, he writes: "For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; night and day we worked, so that we might not burden you, while we preached the gospel of God to you."

To emphasize the extent of their labor and toil, Paul states, "Night and day we worked." The reason that "night and day" are in reverse order is probably because of the Jewish mode of calculation, according to which night preceded day, and it means as much as our common expression

36. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, pp. 169-173.

37. D. W. Bousset, "Das Reich Gottes in der Predigt Jesu", Theologische Rundschau, vol. 4&5 (1901-1902), pp. 397-407; 437-449.

"day and night," namely, "continually."³⁸

And now Paul explains the reason why they did this, namely, so that they might not burden these Christians. Paul did not want to give the impression that he preached the gospel for the sake of money; hence, he preached the gospel free of charge. He not only preached the gospel but he did manual labor, making tents, so that he might earn his own livelihood and not burden the people. And all this he did out of deep concern for these Christians.

In verse ten he returns to the idea of chapter one, verses five and six and points out that in their deep concern for them, he and his fellow workers, who were probably Silas and Timothy, set a good example for them.

"You are witnesses and so is God, how holily and justly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers." The Apostle calls upon not only the Thessalonians but also God to be his witness that their motives and actions were all in accord with their teachings. Also in dealing with them, the Apostle states that he and his fellow workers dealt kindly with them. "As you know, how we exhorted, consoled, and charged everyone of you, as a father treats his children, that you walk worthily of God, who is calling you into His own kingdom and glory."

Here we are especially interested in the clause, "who

38. P. J. Gloag, The Pulpit Commentary, p. 28.

has called you into His own kingdom and glory." It should be observed that "His" is very emphatic, being represented by heautou at a prominent place. What is here meant by His kingdom? The possessive genitive heautou undoubtedly refers to God, mentioned in this very connection. Also of importance here is the question whether kalountos refers to past or present time. It could refer to past time, representing an imperfect in a sentence with a finite verb. But if it should refer to past time, the aorist participle would be much more in place, in fact, it would be demanded by Paul's usage because he always speaks of God's calling as effective. The only possibility then is to consider the participle as signifying, from Paul's point of view, action in the present time. We translate, "Who is calling." This indicates definitely that Paul is thinking of the Thessalonian Christians as not yet being in the kingdom. The conclusion then is inevitable that the kingdom here spoken of was lying in the future for the Thessalonians.

"His kingdom and glory" are not to be taken as a Hebraism to be translated "His glorious kingdom" or "the kingdom of His glory," but they are to be viewed as two separate objects.³⁹

"Glory" here is future, although the idea of the present cannot be excluded. Throughout the New Testament Christ

39. P. J. Gloag, Op. Cit., p. 28.

is spoken of as returning in glory. Cf. Matt. 24, 30; 25, 31; Mark 13, 26; Luke 21, 27. Especially in Matthew 25, 31, the future glory is coupled with the idea of reigning. Although the idea of present glory is not absent (John 17, 22), yet the predominant concept is future. In I Peter 5, 1, Peter states that he is a partaker of "the glory which shall be revealed." And in verse four of the same chapter, he states that the Christians shall receive "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." In Colossians 3, 4, Paul states, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." On the basis of this, "glory" is best taken as the future glory.

Since "kingdom" is here coupled with "glory", this fact, too, assures us that here "kingdom" is predominantly future, while it extends into the present.⁴⁰

This passage also shows the way in which one becomes an heir of this kingdom, namely, by God's calling one through the gospel, II Thess. 2, 14.

II Thessalonians 1, 3-5

In the first chapter of II Thessalonians Paul comforts the Christians. After his words of address and salutation, Paul proceeds: "We are obliged to give thanks to God always concerning you, brethren, even as it is meet."

40. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit., pp. 259-261.

Gloag holds that "we" refers to Paul, Silas, and Timothy. They are obliged to give thanks because of the circumstances; they are so filled with joy that they cannot do otherwise.⁴¹

In the next clause Paul tells the reason why they are obliged to give thanks: "Because your faith is growing exceedingly and the love of each single one of you increases toward one another."

"Faith" here as in verse three is faith in Christ and "love" is Christian love which is shown to one's fellow man. "Faith and love" include the whole Christian life. Faith is the source and love is the outcome.⁴²

Then Paul tells the result of all of this: "So that we boast about you in the churches of God with respect to your perseverance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which you endure."

These persecutions and afflictions are "an indication of the righteous judgment of God." Paul is comforting these Christians by referring to the coming of our Lord, at which time He will deliver them, punish their persecutors, and reward them according to His grace.⁴³

"So that you might be worthy of the Kingdom of God, in

41. P. J. Gloag, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 1 & 2.

42. Ibid.

43. Paul E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of the Bible, vol. II of the New Testament, pp. 358-359.

behalf of which you also suffer." Eis to with the infinitive expresses purpose although the idea of result is not absent.⁴⁴ Their suffering in itself does not make them worthy of the kingdom of God, but it makes them worthy inasmuch as it helps them persevere in their faith and cling more intensely to Christ.

Of special interest to us here, is to determine just what Paul means when he writes, "So that you might be worthy of the kingdom of God." Is the kingdom in this instance present or does it lie in the future?

R. C. H. Lenski holds that the "righteous judgment" spoken of in the first part of this verse is present, but, on the other hand, he explains "to be counted worthy of this kingdom" thus: "To be considered fit for entering this kingdom at the final consummation."⁴⁵

Most of the commentators hold that basileia here refers to the future kingdom. It could be taken to refer to the present time and in that case it would mean, "So that you might be worthy of the kingdom of God, in which you are now already." However, this does not seem to be the best interpretation because of the context, especially verse seven, refers to the future. In verse seven Paul states, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord

44. A. T. Robertson, A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament, pp. 347-348.

45. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit., pp. 383-392.

Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."

To conclude, we hold that Paul is speaking of the kingdom of the future. Hence, we would interpret it thus: "So that you might be worthy of the kingdom of God which shall be revealed at the consummation."

This passage gives no indication whatever whether the basileia is a reign or a realm.

Ephesians 5, 1-5

In the first three chapters of this epistle Paul treats of various doctrines. In the second part he gives various admonitions with regard to unity, the sins of the time, and Christian life in general. In chapter five he exhorts the readers to be imitators of Christ and to flee certain sins.

"Be imitators of God, as beloved children." Ginesthe is a durative imperative and expresses the idea that they should always be imitators of God. Mimestai expresses likeness and similarity but not complete duplication.⁴⁶

"As beloved children." "As" expresses reality. "Be imitators of God as beloved children which you are."

"Beloved" means that they are the object of God's love.⁴⁷

"And walk in love." The kai is exegetical and explains the point of imitation. We should imitate God's

46. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 590-602.

47. Lange-Schaff Commentary, pp. 176-180.

love, which is His essential character. Cf. I John 4, 16. This correct relationship to God will bar us from filthiness.⁴⁸

"As also Christ loved us and gave Himself for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Here we have the acme of love which we should imitate. Frosphora is here used in a general sense to give the meaning that Christ voluntarily gave both His life and His death as an offering for us. Thysia is here used in a narrow sense to specify Christ's sacrifice of Himself on the cross. "Fragrant" shows that the offering and sacrifice were acceptable and pleasing to God. Cf. Gen. 8, 21.⁴⁹

Verses four and five present another motive.

"But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not once be name among you, as is fitting to the saints." The "all" and the "not once" make this absolute so that there should be no sign of these sins in their lives. Their close relation to God, which was explained in the previous verses, makes it impossible for them to commit these sins.

"For this you know." The gar is argumentative. Paul uses both oida which implies simple knowing and ginoskein which implies personal realization. This is not a Hebraism

48. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit., pp. 590-602.

49. Lange-Schaff Commentary (ad locum), pp. 176-180.

but is to be translated, "This you know, realizing that--"50

"Every fornicator, or unclean person, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." The "every" and the "no" make it absolute that such people have no inheritance in the kingdom.⁵¹

Our task here is to determine what is meant by "the kingdom of Christ and God." This is one of the few times when the kingdom is referred to as belonging to Christ. The Reverend R. T. Du Brau explains that when the kingdom of Christ is referred to, it implies "the economy of God's grace in Christ. Head and heart of the basileia tou Christou kai theou is Jesus the Christ, and with Him the believers are united in the una sancta."⁵²

With regard to the presence of the article before Christos and its absence before theos, some commentators apply Sharp's rule which in this case would identify Christ with God. But Robertson states in this connection: "Paul may here mean to affirm the deity of Christ by the use of the one article with Christou kai theou. But Sharp's rule cannot be insisted on here because theos is often definite without the article like a proper name. Paul did teach the

50. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit., pp. 590-602.

51. Ibid.

52. R. T. Du Brau, "Lexical Notes on the 'Kingdom' ", Concordia Theological Monthly, vol. XIX, no. 10 (Oct., 1948), pp. 777-784.

deity of Christ and may do it here."⁵³

It should be noticed, however, that according to Paul's conception of the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God are not two different entities, but one and the same thing. The kingdom of which he is speaking can be called that of Christ, and that of God.

Again the term "inheritance" is used in this connection by the Apostle. Inheritance implies the existence of heirs, of sons or children. Whatever Paul's view of the kingdom may have been, it is clear that he considers participation in the kingdom as something that is intended and provided for the children of God.

Also of interest is to ascertain whether the basileia is here present or future. If it is taken as referring to the present time, then this clause would give the meaning, "Those who commit these sins have no inheritance in the kingdom which exists now." If it is taken as referring to the future, then this clause would have the meaning, "Those who commit these sins have no inheritance in the kingdom which will come."

In the other passages where Paul speaks of inheriting the kingdom (Gal. 4, 16-21; I Cor. 6, 9-11), the kingdom is future. It is our opinion that in Paul's view the

53. Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. IV, pp. 542-543.

kingdom in this connection also is future. In that case, the present tense, echei, cannot be pressed too much, but simply implies the absoluteness of the statement that such people do not have any inheritance in the kingdom, present or future.

To conclude, our opinion is that the basileia here is primarily future and extends into the present.

Colossians 1, 9-14

In the first two chapters of Colossians Paul stresses true doctrine, that Christ is the redeemer, creator, and the head of the church, and he rejects the false doctrine of the Gnostics. In chapters three and four he discusses the Christian life and things concerning his personal affairs.⁵⁴

After the words of address Paul proceeds to tell the Colossian Christians that he and his fellow workers thank God for them and pray for them. In verse nine he recapitulates his statement and goes into the idea more thoroughly.

"For this reason also we, from the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord (with a desire) to please Him in all things bearing fruit in every good

54. Dr. Wm. Arndt, New Testament Introduction, p. 22.

work and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to His glorious power, for all endurance and longsuffering, with joy giving thanks to the Father who made us fit to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light."

The verses just cited are a joy-filled passage thanking God for grace and mercy manifested toward the Colossian Christians.

"Spiritual light" might here be taken as future referring to heaven, on the basis of its use with the word "inheritance". However, because of the following clause which shows that it is contrasted to spiritual darkness, it would be better to take it as referring to the present.

In verse thirteen begins a passage which is of utmost importance for the understanding of Paul's teaching on the kingdom of God. "Who (God) rescued us from the power of the Darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have the redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Paul says of God that He "rescued" us. It is a strong word, implying that we had been in extreme danger. Then the power from which we were rescued is mentioned. It was the authority of darkness. That darkness here refers to Satan and his rule will hardly be questioned. We by no means were free people, a dread dominion was exercised over

us by the prince of darkness. It must be noted that the word used for dominion is exousia, authority. It was a sad situation in which we were placed. "Darkness" makes us think of helplessness, the everlasting doom. But God did something for us; He accomplished a rescue, He took us out of Satan's authority. Paul points to our conversion, made possible by the work of Christ. God's action was not merely negative. Not only did He take us out of the dominion of Satan, but He translated or transferred (metesteesen) us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Especially at this point we have many indications of Paul's view of the kingdom.

Here again Paul refers to the kingdom of Christ by calling it "the kingdom of the Son of His love." "Of His love," is a genitive of characteristic. "His" refers to the Father. The Son is deeply loved by the Father.

This passage also casts light on our problem whether the kingdom is "reign" or "realm". Since "kingdom" is contrasted with "power" which is abstract, the kingdom is evidently here thought of as being primarily abstract in the sense of dominion and it is merely by inference that it is spoken of as a place, and does so only to refer to the sphere in which this reign is exercised.⁵⁵ "Transferred into the kingdom," does seem to indicate that the concept

55. Dr. F. E. Mayer, Op. Cit., pp. 16 ff.

of "realm" is not entirely excluded from the connotation of "kingdom".

What does Paul mean to say when he tells us that we are translated into the dominion or reign of Christ? Clearly he wishes to say that we now have another king who rules us, a loving king, who redeemed us and in whom we have the forgiveness of all our sins (verse 14).

The kingdom here is definitely present. Paul uses the aorist, metesteesen, to show that those who have inheritance with the saints in light are now in the kingdom.⁵⁶

To recapitulate, it is our view that the kingdom is in this case predominantly something which is abstract and is thought of as "reign". It is merely by inference that it is referred to as a place.

Colossians 4, 10-11

Chapters three and four of this epistle contain the practical part of the epistle to the Colossians. Paul discusses the Christian life and tells of some of his personal affairs.⁵⁷

"Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you." Aristarchus was a Jew who was born at Thessalonica. He was in Ephesus when the heathen started a riot in which Paul was

56. W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, pg. 501.

57. Dr. Wm. Arndt, Op. Cit., pg. 22.

endangered. He was with Paul when the latter was imprisoned in Judea and also when he was imprisoned in Italy.⁵⁸

"Fellow prisoner" means that he shared the hardships of the gospel warfare with Paul.⁵⁹

"And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (greet you)." Mark is the writer of the second Gospel, who went with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey and later deserted them. Note that here Mark and Luke are now again with Paul.

"And Jesus who is called Justus (greet you)." Justus is his surname. Jesus was also from Thessalonica, not a Jew, but he, like Aristarchus, was with the committee which took the collection to Jerusalem.⁶⁰

"These alone are my co-workers for the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort to me." "Who are of the circumcision" is to be connected with "these alone are my co-workers."

Our task here is to determine the meaning of "co-workers for the kingdom of God." A. Hovey explains it thus: "With a view to the kingdom, workers together with him, for the bringing in of the kingdom"⁶¹, while Goodspeed translates it: "Who have worked with me for the reign of God."

58. Dr. Theodore Graebner, The Annotated Pocket New Testament, part 8, p. 43.

59. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 200-204.

60. Ibid.

61. Alvah Hovey, An American Commentary on the New Testament, p. 54.

Fausset holds that it means that they were his co-workers in promoting the Gospel kingdom.⁶² G. G. Findlay states that it refers to the preaching of the kingdom of God.⁶³

It is impossible to determine exactly what Paul meant by this phrase, but one thing is certain that the basic idea is that Paul and his co-workers preached the Gospel to bring people into the kingdom, if it is to be conceived of as a realm, or to bring them under the sway of God's gracious reign. If it is to be conceived of as a realm, then it could be either present or future, but if it is to be conceived of as God's reign, then it is present. In our opinion the latter is the better interpretation. Holding this view, we think of these men as Paul's assistants as he was preaching the good news which Jesus had preached, that God now through the Messiah was establishing His beneficent dominion, and that all who would accept Jesus as their Savior would be ruled by His loving power.

I Corinthians 4, 18-21

In the first four chapters of this epistle Paul is trying to correct the moral defects in the congregation. He especially condemns their arrogancy, as he writes: "Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I

62. A. R. Fausset, Op. Cit. (ad locum), p. 382.

63. The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 47, p. 213.

will come to you soon, if the Lord wills."

When he comes, he will use his spiritual discernment to find if there is any truth in what they say. "And I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power." These Corinthians thought that they already had the kingdom and it was showing itself in them through their wisdom, but Paul says that he will find out the power of these proud people. He is not speaking of their own power, but of God's power which manifests itself in the indwelling of the Spirit and in good works.⁶⁴

Then Paul makes the axiomatic statement: "For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power."

"This passage will perhaps shed new light on that aspect of the basileia which we considered in connection with Colossians 1, 9-14. Here Paul says that the kingdom consists in power, whereas in Colossians 1, 9-14, he used it somewhat as a parallel to "power" or "dominion".

The commentators present various views of interpretation of the kingdom of God in this connection. Schlatter maintains that it means "God's lordship" (Herrschaft)⁶⁵ Olshausen states: "The kingdom of God implies here... the living fellowship established by the Savior which lives in the soul, but manifests itself in the essential character of

64. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 201-202.

65. A. Schlatter, Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament, p. 43.

those belonging to it."⁶⁶ Clarke presents still another interpretation: the kingdom is the religion which Jesus revealed.⁶⁷ Fausset explains this verse thus: "Not empty 'speeches,' but the manifest 'power' of the Spirit attests the presence of 'the kingdom of God' (the reign of the Gospel spiritually), in a Church or in an individual."⁶⁸ Here we notice especially that Fausset states that the kingdom of God is "the reign of the Gospel spiritually."

Lenski also maintains that in this case basileia means "reign". He states that en (esti) "means neither 'consists in,' 'rests on,' nor 'is conditioned by'; for en denotes the accompanying circumstance, which in this case happens to be also the mark of recognition." In this connection he also states that "the power of the kingdom, by which it is also always easily recognized, produces true faith, true confession, true love, and a galaxy of true Christian virtues."⁶⁹

Lenski also explains that this kingdom is not like a human kingdom, for when a king dies, the kingdom still exists, but the kingdom of God cannot exist without God. "God's kingdom exists where God is to be found, with all

66. Hermann Olshausen, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. IV, pp. 250-251.

67. Adam Clarke, A Commentary and Critical Notes, vol. 6, p. 114.

68. A. R. Fausset, Op. Cit. (ad locum), p. 271.

69. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 201-202.

the power of his grace in Christ Jesus, and there alone...."⁷⁰

Our problem is whether we should translate "the kingdom of God is in connection with power" or "the kingdom of God consists in power." Seemingly, Lenski's objection is that in saying that the kingdom consists in power, we thereby would exclude the other aspects of the kingdom which are mentioned in Romans 14, 17 (The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.) However, by translating, "The kingdom of God consists in power," does not mean that it does not also consist in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. In our opinion it is best to translate "consists in."

Here the kingdom is conceived of as being present, for Paul says that he shall find out their power, that is, God's saving power which manifests itself in the indwelling of the Spirit and in good works and which should be in their present possession.

Furthermore, in trying to determine whether the kingdom here is "reign" or "realm," it would be very difficult to try to explain that this "realm" consists in power, whereas it would be relatively easy to explain that God's reign consists in power. It is this power which makes the Gospel not mere words, but an effective saving Word and it is this power which works through the Word which makes us fit to be

70. Ibid.

partakers of the kingdom of God:

To conclude, we maintain that in this connection it is best to translate, "The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power," that is, the workings of the "holy Ghost in the believer, manifesting itself in good works. We also hold that in this case the kingdom is in Paul's view the present reign of God.

I Corinthians 6; 9-11

In chapters five and six Paul writes against immorality and the wrong use of the courts.⁷¹ In the first verses of chapter six he speaks of Christians going to court with Christians and then in verse nine he writes: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" In the next sentence he tells who some of these unrighteous people are: "Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor catamites, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God."

"The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God," because the kingdom is one which consists in righteousness. Cf. Rom. 14, 17.

We also notice that in both cases basileia is anarthrous. The article is not really needed here because

71. Dr. Wm. Arndt, Op. Cit., p. 26.

the genitive, του θεου, makes it definite. It is anarthrous, however, to bring out the antithesis to "unrighteousness."⁷²

Of special importance here is to ascertain the meaning of "inherit the kingdom of God."

Lenski points out that "inherit" does not mean simply to participate in, but actually to own it. Furthermore, he holds that in this instance the kingdom is future. Although the kingdom of God is found already here on earth, wherever the power of the gospel is operative in man, yet when Paul speaks of inheriting the kingdom, he is thinking of the future. However, Paul, as is characteristic of him, "includes the whole sweep of time and eternity." Cf. verses 2.5.⁷³

Our task here again is to determine whether the kingdom is present or future. In our opinion this passage is a parallel to Galatians 4, 16-21 and was presented there applies here also. Briefly, we maintain that the kingdom in this case is future because it is somewhat a parallel to Matthew 25, 34 (Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.) Furthermore, we also hold that it is future because of the significance of κλειρονομεουσιν. Concerning this word

72. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 246-249.

73. Ibid.

Dr. Graebner states:

The words "heir" and "inheritance" are to be carefully distinguished from our modern use of the same words. Today the "heir" is one who has not yet come into his "inheritance" but has to wait until the death of the present possessor. In the Bible, however, the Christian's heritage is something present and actual, being enjoyed here and now.⁷⁴

As true as this is, this does not mean that the word "inherit" does not contain some future element. It cannot be proven that "inherit" refers to Judgment Day, but yet it does seem to indicate that for the Corinthians the kingdom lay in the future.

In our opinion, then, the kingdom in this case is future. As to whether it is a "reign" or a "realm" nothing can be determined from this passage. This passage, however, implies that those who were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God shall inherit the kingdom of God.

I Corinthians 15, 20-28

In chapter fifteen Paul writes about the resurrection of the body and points out that since Christ has risen from the dead, we have proof of our own resurrection. "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by a man came death, also through a man the resurrection of the dead. For just

74. Dr. Theodore Graebner, Op. Cit., part 8, pp.33.34.

as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then those who are Christ's, at his coming. Then comes the end, when He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father."

In "when He will deliver," represented by hotan paradidoi in the text, the verb is the present active subjunctive of paradidomi. With hotan the verb is very indefinite and uncertain as far as the actual time is concerned. We also notice that the present subjunctive is used rather than the aorist, because it is more suitable for future proceedings.⁷⁵

Our task here is to determine what is meant by the kingdom. Paul states that Christ will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. Evidently, the kingdom spoken of is Christ's economical or mediatorial kingdom. Christ will keep the essential kingdom and will rule with the Father and the Holy Ghost, but He will deliver the mediatorial kingdom to the Father. H. E. Jacobs states: "The Kingdom of Christ, in this sense, is simply the entire order of agencies through which, in this life, He works for man's salvation."⁷⁶

This passage cannot mean that Christ will cease to reign, for Luke 1, 33 states that Christ's kingdom shall

75. A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. IV, p. 191.

76. Henry E. Jacobs, The Lutheran Commentary, vol. 8, pp. 128-130.

have no end. Lenski explains: "As little as the Father fails to rule now when Christ exercises the rule, so little will Christ cease to rule when he delivers the rule to the Father."⁷⁷

Fausset makes it still clearer in his explanation:

Really, His giving up of the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, when the end for which the mediatorial economy was established has been accomplished is altogether in harmony with its continuing everlastingly. The change which shall then take place, shall be in manner of administration, not in the kingdom itself; God shall then come into direct connection with the earth, instead of mediatorially, when Christ shall have fully and finally removed everything that severs asunder the holy God and a sinful earth.⁷⁸

The thing which must be decided is the meaning of "kingdom". We have come to the conclusion that "kingdom" here refers to Christ's mediatorial kingdom which will be delivered to the Father at the time of the parousia, for at that time there will be no need for Christ to act as our mediator. This does not mean that Christ will no longer reign, but He will reign with the Father and the Holy Ghost forever and ever.

In this case the kingdom evidently must be taken as being present, for if at the parousia Christ will deliver the kingdom to the Father, then certainly it is in Christ's possession now. Furthermore, the word "deliver" implies that there will also be a future kingdom. Paul does not

77. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 671 ff.

78. A. R. Fausset, Op. Cit., p. 293.

say that at the time of the parousia the kingdom will be abolished, but that it will be delivered to the Father. Hence, "will deliver" refers to the consummation of the present kingdom.

With respect to the question whether in this case "kingdom" means "reign" or "realm," if it is to be taken as "realm" then it would agree with the dogmatists' idea that the kingdom of grace will at that time become the kingdom of glory. However, because of the context, it would be better to take it to mean "reign". In the immediate context which follows, Paul states that Christ "will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, when He shall abolish all rule and all authority and power." And of special importance here is the following sentence: "For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet." The fact that Christ is reigning and must reign indicates that the basileia is the act of reigning. Therefore, we conclude that in this case basileia is Christ's present reign.

I Corinthians 15, 42-50

In chapter fifteen Paul proves from Christ's resurrection that all people shall rise again. His argument is directed against those who say that there is no resurrection of the dead (verse twelve). In verse thirty-six and continuing to verse fifty, he uses the illustration of

a seed to show that the physical body must be transformed into a spiritual or glorified body before it can enter heaven, as he writes in verses forty-two and following: "So also is the resurrection of the dead, it is sown in corruption and raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But not the spiritual but the physical is first: and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, made of the earth; the second from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." And then in verse fifty he gives the reason why the physical body must die and be transformed into a glorified body, namely, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

"Flesh and blood" are to be taken as one concept because the verb is singular. "Flesh and blood" is the body in its present state, which must undergo a change before it can inherit the glories of heaven.⁷⁹

79. Dr. Theodore Graebner, Op. Cit., part 6, p. 73.

"Cannot inherit" shows that the mortal body is not capable of inheriting the kingdom. The mortal body cannot inherit the things which are immortal, neither can the perishable inherit the imperishable. But the mortal body must first be changed into a glorified body before it can partake of the eternal joy and happiness of heaven.

The problem here again is to determine the meaning of "kingdom". While it cannot be determined at this place whether it is to be taken as "reign" or "realm," yet we can determine whether it is present or future. If it is to be taken as being present, then the meaning would be that the mortal body is not able to inherit the kingdom which is now present. But in our opinion it seems necessary to take it as referring to the future because of the future element in the connotation of the word "inherit" and because of the context itself.

Paul has been writing about the resurrection of the body and in the portion immediately preceding this verse, he shows that the body must be transformed before it can partake in the joys and happiness of heaven. Now, to take "kingdom" as being present would be out of place. Hence, the context demands that in this instance "kingdom" is future.

Romans 14, 13-17

Chapters twelve to sixteen contain the practical part of the epistle in which Paul tells the manner in which one should treat a weaker brother and the way in which one should deal with things of indifference. Paul writes in verse thirteen: "Then let us no longer judge one another, but rather decide this, not to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in a brother's way. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks that something is unclean, to him it is unclean. For if on account of eating, your brother is offended, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not with your eating destroy him, for whom Christ died. Therefore, do not let your good be spoken of as evil." Then in verse seventeen Paul makes an axiomatic statement such as he made in I Corinthians 4, 20. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Zahn holds that "kingdom" in this case means the royal lordship of God. Wherever the gospel, the declaration of the King, is preached and is accepted in faithful obedience, and also the will of God is done by men, there God rules with His grace. Then certainly the royal lordship of God is not (that is, does not consist in) the act of eating and drink-

ing.⁸⁰

Dr. Theodore Graebner explains this verse thus:
 "Christianity is not made up of such externals."⁸¹ C. H. Dodd explains the connection between the kingdom and Christianity thus: "The question is, What is the Christian life, at bottom? It is living under the Reign of God.... In speaking of the Reign of God, therefore, Paul is thinking of Christianity as a supernatural life lived in the holy Spirit. It is not, like many other religions, like even the Jewish religion in some aspects, a matter of eating and drinking."⁸²

Our problem is to determine the meaning of basileia.^{P2} If it is to be taken in the sense of "realm," then this would mean that the realm of God does not consist in the act of eating and drinking. If it is to be taken in the sense of "reign," then it would mean that the reign of God does not consist in the act of eating and drinking. In either case, the kingdom is something which is abstract. In our opinion Lenski offers the best explanation: God's ruling through the Gospel "does not consist of activities on our part such as eating and drinking."⁸³ To say that God's

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80. Theodor Zahn, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (ad locum), p. 581.
 81. Dr. Theodore Graebner, Op. Cit., part 6, p.37.
 82. C. H. Dodd, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (ad locum), pp. 213-218.
 83. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 840.841.

realm does not consist in eating and drinking would be hard to explain, but if we would say that God's reigning does not consist in our eating and drinking but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the thought would be relatively easier to explain.

Another consideration should be added. If we were to hold that "righteousness, peace, and joy" are aspects of the kingdom by which it is recognized, as Lenski suggested in respect to I Corinthians 4, 20, then the passage would mean that God's reigning does not show itself insofar as we are permitted to eat or not to eat something, but in this that He gives us righteousness, peace, and joy.⁸⁴

By "righteousness, peace, and joy" evidently is meant "the righteousness which avails before God, the righteousness of faith; peace is peace with God; and joy in the Holy Ghost is the joy which animates the justified Christians, which the indwelling Spirit works in them. These are the essential properties of the kingdom of God."⁸⁵

Furthermore, we can determine from this passage whether "kingdom" is present or future. If it should be taken as future, then the eating and drinking and also the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost would have to refer

84. A. Schlatter, Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament, p. 165.

85. Erwin W. Koehlinger, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 190.

to the future. But Paul is speaking of their present eating and drinking, not something which they would do in the future, but something which they had done and something which they were doing. And "righteousness, peace, and joy" are blessing which they already had in their possession.

Hence, we conclude that in this case the kingdom is the present reign of God which does not consist in our act of eating and drinking or abstaining, but in this that God in His grace gives us righteousness, peace, and joy.

II Timothy 4, 1-2

In Paul's second epistle to Timothy Paul writes of faithfulness to the ministry in chapters one and two, of loyalty to the pure doctrine in chapter three, and of personal notices in verse four.⁸⁶ He begins chapter four with an exhortation that they should preach the gospel: "I charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead." Here Paul calls upon God and Christ to be their witnesses to see to it that they carry out this charge.

Paul makes this charge still more serious by charging them also "both by His appearance and His kingdom." "Appearance" and "kingdom" are accusatives of conjuration, used with verbs of swearing.

86. Dr. Wm. Arndt, Op. Cit., p. 45.

Then follows the content of the charge: "Speak the Word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering and patience."

In this case it will be impossible to prove that "kingdom" is to be taken in the sense of "reign" or "realm". However, in our opinion it seems that it would be best to take it in the sense of "reign," because it is connected with another noun which has a verbal aspect, namely, the word "appearance," which we could also translate "appearing". In our opinion it would be better to translate: "I charge you... both by His appearing and His reigning," than to translate: "I charge you... both by His appearing and His realm."

In this case it seems that "kingdom" might be taken as either present or future. However, since "kingdom" is coupled with "appearance," it would be best to take "kingdom" as future. "Appearance" in this case refers to Christ's return in glory on Judgment Day; hence, since "kingdom" is connected with "appearance," it would be best to take them both as referring to the future, especially since there is the possibility that "kingdom" in this case could be future.

To conclude, our view is that in this case the kingdom is definitely future and is best taken in the sense of "reign".

II Timothy 4, 16-18

Among the personal notices which Paul writes about in this chapter are remembrances of his trials. He writes: "At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the Word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth." The "lion's mouth" probably refers to his trial. Then Paul writes: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil." "Will rescue" is an effective future, as also "will save".⁸⁷ "And will save me for his heavenly kingdom."

Although in this case it is impossible to determine whether "kingdom" should be taken in the sense of "reign" or "realm," yet from the text we can decide whether it is present or future.

The kingdom here is undoubtedly future, because, in the first place, it is described as "the kingdom, the heavenly one". "Heavenly" is used in the sense opposite to "earthly". "Heavenly kingdom" in the way in which it is used here, could almost be used as a synonym for "heaven".⁸⁸

Furthermore, we hold that "kingdom" in this case is

87. R. C. H. Lenski, Op. Cit. (ad locum), pp. 891-893.

88. Ibid.

future, because of the immediate context which is future. Paul writes: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil and will save me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

III

Classification of the Passages from Paul's Epistles
in Which the Word Basileia Occurs

The word basileia occurs 157 times in the New Testament, but of these 157 times it occurs only thirteen times in Paul's epistles.⁸⁹ It occurs seven times as "the kingdom of God" and once as "His kingdom" which refers to God's kingdom. (I Thess. 2, 9-12) In II Timothy 4, 16-18, Paul refers to "His heavenly kingdom," in which case "His" refers to "Lord". It is hardly possible to say definitely whether "Lord" refers to God or Christ, or both. It would not be too unusual for it to refer to both God and Christ, for in Ephesians 5, 1-5, Paul mentions the kingdom of Christ and God.

Paul refers to the kingdom of Christ four times. In Ephesians 5, 1-5, he calls it "the kingdom of Christ and God"; in Colossians 1, 9-14, "the kingdom of the Son of His love"; in ^{E. G. Latham's} Colossians 15, 20-28, he speaks of Christ's mediatorial kingdom; and in II Timothy 4, 1, 2, Paul speaks of "His kingdom", referring to Christ's kingdom.

Next we want to classify the passages according to whether they refer to the present or future, and whether they refer to the kingdom in the sense of "reign" or "realm".

89. R. T. Du Brau, Op. Cit., p. 779.

Galatians 5, 16-21	Future	?
I Thessalonians 2, 9-12	Future	?
II Thessalonians 1, 3-5	Future	?
Ephesians 5, 1-5	Future	-?
Colossians 1, 9-14	Present	Reign
Colossians 4, 10-11	Present (?)	Reign
I Corinthians 4, 16-21	Present	Reign
I Corinthians 6, 9-11	Future	?
I Corinthians 15, 20-28	Present.	Reign
I Corinthians 15, 42-50	Future	?
Romans 14, 13-17	Present	Reign
II Timothy 4, 1-2	Future	Reign
II Timothy 4, 16-18	Future	?

According to our classification, the kingdom is spoken of as being present five times, and it is spoken of as being future eight times.

In six cases it would be better to take "kingdom" in the sense of "reign," while in the other cases it cannot be determined whether it should be taken in the sense of "reign" or "realm". Hence, our tabulation shows that the future aspect of the kingdom is predominant and that "kingdom" should be taken primarily in the sense of "reign". It is only by inference that the connotation of "realm" is present in the connotation of the word basileia.

IV

Paul's Concept of the Kingdom

The English word "kingdom" conveys the predominant concept of "realm". However, in Paul's concept the word "kingdom", represented by basileia, conveys predominantly the sense of "reign". From various passages in Paul's epistles in which this word occurs, we find that he definitely thought of the basileia as a "reign" (I Cor. 4, 20; 15, 24), while in no instance can it be said that he definitely thought of the basileia as a realm.⁹⁰ On the other hand, the connotation of "realm," the sphere in which this reign is exercised, seems to some extent to be present in Paul's concept of the word. Paul speaks of inheriting the kingdom (Gal. 5, 21; Eph. 5, 5; I Cor. 6, 9.10.), of being saved for the heavenly kingdom (II Tim. 4, 18). In these cases the local idea, or the idea of the kingdom as a realm, is suggested by the terminology and is present in the context, yet the case should not be pressed. To illustrate, we speak of a prince inheriting or receiving the father's reign; also we speak of a man's entering the ministry. In the latter case it is only by inference that the local

90. Archibald M. Hunter, The Message of the New Testament, p. 55. Hunter states concerning the use of basileia in the gospels, "If we construe 'the saving sovereignty of God' statically--conceiving of the Basileia as a 'realm' rather than a 'rule'--we shall never properly understand the Gospels."

idea might be thought of; it is an abstract thing spoken of in concrete form. Similarly, it is only by inference that the idea of "realm" might be present in the connotation of the word basileia.

Paul also conceives of the basileia as both present and future. As present Christ is exercising His mediatorial reign of ruling through the gospel. One aspect of this reign is power (I Cor. 4, 20). Christ's ruling through the gospel makes it powerful (Rom. 1, 16) and effective (vis collativa and vis effectiva).

The effects of God's reign are righteousness, peace, and joy (Rom. 14, 17). God's ruling through the gospel imparts righteousness, peace, and joy.

Paul also states that at the time of the parousia Christ's mediatorial kingdom will be delivered to the Father. It will not be destroyed, but since at that time there will be no need for Christ to act as our Mediator, He will deliver His mediatorial reign to the Father and will rule with the Father and the Holy Ghost forever and ever (I Cor. 15, 24).

With respect to the kingdom as future, Paul conceives of the kingdom not only as one's being in the realm of heaven, if the idea of realm is present in the connotation of basileia, but mainly as an actual participation in the

happy reign of God (II Tim. 2, 12).⁹¹

Paul also explains the manner in which the kingdom comes. In the phrase basileia tou theou, the tou theou is a genitive of source which shows that the kingdom comes from God. It is God who gives it (Luke 12, 32). It is on the basis of this that Lenski explains that the kingdom of God is not like a human kingdom, for the human kingdom can continue to exist after the king has died, but the kingdom of God cannot exist without God.

God gives the kingdom, that is, He brings people under His gracious redemptive rule, by calling them by the gospel (I Thess. 2, 12). Simultaneous with conversion is the translation into the kingdom (Col. 1, 15). Of the future kingdom it is said that the believers will inherit it, but before their bodies can enter the heavenly kingdom, they must be changed into glorified bodies (I Cor. 15, 50).

Now, to briefly summarize Paul's concept of the kingdom, the basileia in Paul's view is both present and future, predominantly filled with the idea of reign, although on the periphery of the connotation of the word is present the idea

91. Archibald M. Hunter, Op. Cit., p. 54, "Amidst the evil and misery of the present the pious Jew dreamed of a blessed time when the living God would finally and decisively manifest his Rule, overthrow all evil, vindicate the right, and show his grace and mercy to his faithful people. In that sense the Basileia of God, his redemptive Rule, is an eschatological idea: it is a great hope-- nay more, the supreme hope-- of the future, of the last times."

of realm. As present the kingdom is God's redemptive rule.
As future it is the happy reign which the true believers
shall inherit and through which they will reign with Jesus
Christ, our Savior, forever and ever.

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