**GOSPEL AND KINGDOM SERIES**

**Part 8 THE KINGDOM REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST (1)**

To be a Christian is to recognise in Jesus Christ the goal of the history of redemption. Because He is the perfect image of God (Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9,10; Hebrews 1:3), He is the One towards whom all former revelation of God is heading, and in whom it is fulfilled and given its meaning.

The Old Testament anticipated the New and was fulfilled in the New

* *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,****2****but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe* (Hebrews 1:1,2 NIV)
* *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God* (2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV)
* *“We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus” (Acts 13:32,33* NIV*)*
* *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:27* NIV*)*

The Old Testament’s progression towards fulfilment in the New is more than an invitation to understand Jesus Christ as the end of the process. It is a demand that the whole Bible be understood in the light of the gospel. It means that Jesus Christ is the key to the interpretation of the whole Bible.

**The gospel**

What is the gospel? Essentially, the gospel is a declaration of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. It is the objective historical facts of the coming of Jesus in the flesh and the God-given interpretation of those facts. The facts are those of the incarnation, of the perfect life of Jesus of Nazareth, and of His dying and rising from the grave.

In referring to the birth of Jesus as ‘incarnation,’ we make the biblical assertion that this was no mere man, nor even a man with some divine qualities. The baby in the manger was at one and the same time, in one and the same person, both Son of God and son of man – both fully divine and fully human; both God and man. Without the recognition that Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man, we cannot maintain the gospel as good news nor as the power of God for salvation. The gospel is saying that, what man cannot do in order to be accepted by God, this God Himself has done for us in the person of Jesus Christ. To be acceptable to God we must present to God a life of perfect and unceasing obedience to His will.

The gospel declares that Jesus has done this *for us*. For God to be righteous He must deal with our sin. This He has done *for us* in Jesus. The holy Law of God was lived out perfectly *for us* by Christ. This living and dying of Christ *for us*, and this alone, is the basis of our acceptance with God. Only the God-man, Jesus Christ, could both live the true sinless, human life and rise victorious over death after paying the penalty for humanity’s sin.

In summary: the gospel is what God has done for us in Christ for our salvation. And as the two natures of this Christ must be distinguished, so also must what God has done *for us* be distinguished from what God has done *in us*. As the two natures of Christ are separate and yet perfectly one, so we must see the gospel and its fruit in our lives as separate but yet one. It is by the gospel that we are born again (1 Peter 1:23-25). It is the gospel that produces the sanctified life (Colossians 1:5,6).

**The gospel of the Kingdom**

Mark wrote that Jesus preached the gospel of God by declaring that ‘*The time has come … the kingdom of God is near’* (1:14,15). The gospel’s theme relates to the Kingdom. The term ‘Kingdom of God’ meant something to those who heard Jesus even though the term itself was not specifically used in the Old Testament.

The unavoidable conclusion from the New Testament evidence is that the gospel fulfils the Old Testament hope of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The fact that the various strata of Kingdom revelation in the Bible define the progressive nature of revelation in the Bible reminds us of the diversity of expression within the overall unity. Each Kingdom expression – Eden, Israel, Prophetic Kingdom and now the Gospel – represent the same reality, but each expresses that reality in a different but yet related way.

The New Testament affirms the reality is in the gospel – in Christ Himself. He must interpret all Scripture. The New Testament repeatedly maintains that Christ is the fulfilment of the terms, images, promises and foreshadowings in the Old Testament. The New Testament emphasis is that the interpretation of the Old Testament is not ‘literal’ but Christological. The coming of Christ transforms all the Kingdom terms of the Old Testament into gospel reality.

This study is essentially a summary of ‘The Kingdom Revealed in Jesus Christ’ by Graeme Goldsworthy in ‘*Gospel and Kingdom’* (The Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1987)