

The Greatness of the Kingdom

Part I The Kingdom Defined Pt 1

Introduction

1. The Danger of Oversimplification
2. The Danger of Decentralization
 - a. The Kingdom is Central to the OT
 - b. The Kingdom is Central to the NT
 - c. The Kingdom is Central to prophecy as well as church history
3. The Danger of Misunderstanding
 - a. Cannot understand Eschatology without understanding the Kingdom
 - b. Cannot understand Prophecy without understanding the Kingdom
 - c. Cannot understand church history without understanding the Kingdom.

Summary of Interpretative Schemes

A. Historic Orthodoxy

1. REFORMED: Perfect Reign of God—in heaven after the Last Judgment
2. MILLENNIAL: Visible Reign of Jesus between the 2nd coming and the Judgment
3. CATHOLIC: The visible church's reign between the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ
4. All have one thing in common: All seek to explain and support views from Scriptures.

B. CURRENT INTERPRETIVE SCHEMES

1. National Kingdom Scheme: Israel on the earth, in a kingdom headed by the Messiah, present age. Jewish idea, universal
2. Millennial Kingdom Scheme: Established upon the 2nd return of Christ, and 1000 years long (or a lengthy period). Early church to Augustine; Dispensationalism.
3. Celestial Kingdom Scheme: Reign of God from heaven over men in a. Present age or b. Future age. Neo-Orthodoxy
4. Ecclesiastical Kingdom Scheme: The Church is the Kingdom either in Visible hierarchy (Catholic) or Invisible (Reformed Orthodoxy).
5. The Spiritual Kingdom Scheme: The inner rule of God in the hearts of men. Not an institution, but inspiration.
6. The Moral Kingdom Scheme: Kingdom as ethics. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) This scheme allows for morality apart from a King/God/ruler. It is pure Law with no Lawgiver, Rule without a Ruler, Ethics without Enforcement. Liberal Theology.
7. Liberal Social Kingdom Scheme: The progressive social movement will exercise rule over men. Societal salvation is more important than individual salvation. The church provides social order to help make bad men do good things. Christian Socialism, Nazism, Communism, Liberation Theology, Social Gospel.

CRITIQUE:

- a. Belief in the goodness of men vs. fallen estate of man.
 - b. No belief in the supernatural: God is our collective social consciousness
 - c. Acceptance of socialism as the best system over men in spite of numerous failures.
 - d. Critical approach to scriptures.
 - e. Theology and doctrine are diminished to allow for a Universal Brotherhood of Man, Fatherhood of God, and Universal Salvation.
 - f. Despite its numerous failures wherever tried, supporters say it was just not radical enough.
8. Modern Eschatological Kingdom Scheme: There is no Kingdom. "Zen Kingdom"
 - a. Delusion theory: Albert Schweitzer, "In Search of the Historical Jesus" – Jesus was deluded in thinking he could bring in the Kingdom. There will be no future Kingdom of God.
 - b. Supra-Historical theory: Barth and Brunner and their followers—The church can have no part in the Kingdom because it is eternal, the church is bound by time, so one cannot touch the other. The spiritual Kingdom is an Aristotelian Ideal, and exists in spiritual form only; the church is a pale echo of the Kingdom. Amillennialism and European Liberal Neo-Orthodoxy

Next week: The Definitions & Distinctions of the Kingdom Pt II