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**Jesus' Message about the
Kingdom of God in the Light
of Contemporary Ideas**

The Ethel M Wood Lecture

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by

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THE ETHEL M. WOOD LECTURE

Mrs Ethel M. Wood was daughter of Quintin Hogg, founder of the Regent Street Polytechnic, and herself deeply interested in education. When she died in 1970, she left a bequest to the University to provide for this annual lecture on the English Bible. The bequest made possible the continuation of the series initiated in 1947 by a lecture on 'The Bible and Modern Scholarship' by Sir Frederick Kenyon and directly supported by Mrs Wood during her lifetime. She also presented to the University her unique collection of Bibles, together with a sum of money to enable that collection to be extended. It was her love of the English Bible and her belief that it forms so rich a part of the cultural heritage of this country that led her to these generous actions and we express our appreciation on today's occasion.

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The subject indicated in the title of this lecture is a vast one and I shall not be able to deal with it in detail in the time allotted to me. I shall deal briefly with both parts of the title; I intend to discuss a number of passages from the Psalms of Solomon and the Assumption of Moses as well as from Josephus (adding an appendix on the documents found at Qumran), and will ask how they help us to understand Jesus' sayings about the kingdom of God as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. I shall have to begin, however, with the question to what extent these sayings represent Jesus' own message.¹

I. Jesus' Message about the Kingdom of God

1. Introduction

In recent years I have given much attention to the relationship between Jewish ideas about God's definitive intervention in the affairs of the world in the future and the early Christian responses to Jesus, or, in technical terminology, the relationship between Jewish eschatology and Christian Christology.² In doing so I have tried to take seriously that all forms of early Christology reflect a response to Jesus. Jesus' followers, after his death and resurrection, were convinced that there existed continuity between their Gospel centering around Christ who died and was raised (1 Cor. 15:3-5) and Jesus' own message. Our efforts to distinguish between their ideas and those of Jesus himself have to take this into account. In practice this means that the use of "the criterion of dissimilarity", which leads to concentration on the points on which Jesus is said to have differed from later Christians or contemporary Jews, gives way to "the criterion of multiple attestation", which tries to establish how elements found in different strands of tradition point back to a common kernel of sayings of Jesus, which may indeed be attributed to him, as well as to reports of his actions which are likely to be true to life.

The main difficulty in applying the latter criterion lies in proving that the lines which are followed back not only converge in a point after Jesus' death and resurrection, but that they indeed reflect ideas and events belonging to the time before these crucial events,

so that we can confidently claim to have reached back to Jesus and his circle of followers. Already at the earliest stages of tradition we meet Christians who respond to Jesus. Also their transmission of his words or reports concerning his actions are an aspect of their response. Every word of Jesus handed down to us is at the same time a word of the community. Proving beyond doubt what Jesus actually said and did is in very many cases impossible. At the most we are able to establish probabilities. Nevertheless, the overall picture of Jesus' mission and message can be reconstructed. Let me try to show this in the case of his preaching about the kingdom of God.

As in my book *Christology in Context* and in its sequel *Jesus, the Servant-Messiah* (which gives the text of the Shaffer Lectures held at Yale Divinity School in February 1989) I shall concentrate on our oldest sources Paul, Mark and Q, the common source of Matthew and Luke. I start with a few remarks about Paul.

2. Paul on the Kingdom of God

In 1 Thess. 2:11-12 he describes his activity as an apostle as that of a father guiding his children. "We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and changed you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you to his kingdom and glory." Paul's preaching of the Gospel promises those who accept it a share in the final salvation, designated as God's glorious kingdom, and his exhortations prepare them for their participation in it. For Paul the arrival of the kingdom coincides with the parousia of Christ, mentioned five times in 1 Thessalonians (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-17; 5:23), but he never explicitly connects the two events. He does stress however, in a way comparable to that found in 2:11-12, that the lives of the believers should be directed at the parousia (3:12-13; 5:23) with the help of the Lord. In a well-known passage (4:13-18) he assures his readers that all believers will share in the new life to be granted at Christ's imminent parousia, those who have died in the meantime as well as those who, like Paul himself, will be alive at that time.

What Paul says in this early letter is also found elsewhere. I briefly point to his conviction that the unrighteous will not inherit the

kingdom of God: see his specification of wrong behaviour in 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21. Next, there are his statements concerning the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. He emphasizes that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (15:50, cf. 51-57), and explicitly connects the realization of God's final kingly rule with the parousia. After destroying every rule and authority and power Christ hands over the kingdom to the Father (15:22-28).

For Paul the kingdom of God is directly connected with Jesus' imminent return in glory. In two texts, however, he speaks of the presence of the kingdom in the community of believers, thanks to the display of the power of God in the Spirit. "The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20); "the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).³

3. From Paul, Mark and Q back to Jesus

There are many points of agreement between Paul's statements concerning the kingdom of God and those found in Mark and Q. The chief difference lies in the fact that nearly all the statements found in Mark and Q are attributed to Jesus himself. Paul very seldom refers to words and acts of Jesus,⁴ so that it is not surprising that he did not connect his (sometimes stereotyped, and therefore probably traditional) preaching about the kingdom with the earthly Jesus either. But Mark and Q do: can it be demonstrated that they had the right to do so? In other words: is it plausible that the message of the kingdom of God was a vital part of Jesus' preaching? The great majority of New Testament scholars think so, but consensus, though important, does not constitute proof. Moreover there is by no means general agreement amongst those scholars on the exact contents of Jesus' message. Let me indicate what I regard as plausible, taking what may seem a somewhat roundabout way.

In the second of my Shaffer Lectures⁵ I outlined three models used by Jesus' early followers to explain his death. In the first model Jesus is the last messenger sent by God to Israel and rejected by his people: in fact he was the very last one, immediately before

the impending judgement. According to the second model he was one of the suffering righteous who remained obedient to God's will, and was therefore vindicated by God after his death. According to the third Jesus was a martyr, living and dying in solidarity with those connected with him, and thereby effecting a decisive turn in God's relation to his servants. These three models are not specifically Christian, in so far as they apply notions also found in contemporary Jewish writings. Typically Christian is the conviction that Jesus was a prophet, a righteous one and a martyr who by his death and vindication brought about a definitive change in the history of the world; in other words, the time of the end had already begun in what happened to him.

To put it in a somewhat different way: the conviction that God had vindicated Jesus by raising him from the dead is central for the Christian faith. This conviction itself need not carry with it the notion that the end-time had already begun. The fact that the Jesus community after Easter believed that the definitive turn had taken place can only be explained by assuming that already before Jesus' death his followers believed that their master had inaugurated the new era promised by God. If so, the words about the kingdom of God attributed to Jesus are very important indeed.

4. Sayings about the Kingdom in Mark and Q as evidence for Jesus' own message

Let me, therefore, briefly review the most important sayings of Jesus about the kingdom, concentrating on those in Mark and Q. It seems to me that together they present a coherent picture; whilst we can never be certain that individual words were spoken by Jesus as our oldest sources record them, it is extremely plausible that the overall picture is reliable.

According to Q Jesus taught his disciples to pray "Father, hallowed be Thy name; thy kingdom come" (Luke 11:2⁶). They may pray for a new initiative by God, a new era in which God receives the honour due to him. God is called Father, a form of address characteristic of the early Christian community (Gal. 4:6-7; Rom. 8:14-16) and of Jesus (Mark 14:36; Luke 10:21-22 par. Matt.

11:25-27). It is generally considered to go back to Jesus' unique relationship to God.⁷ This beginning of the Lord's Prayer may be connected with another section about prayer in Q (Luke 11:9-13 par. Matt. 7:7-11) ending with the words "If you, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things (so Matthew, Luke has "the Holy Spirit") to those who ask him," and with yet another Q-pericope (Luke 12:22-31 par. Matt. 6:25-33), which urges believers to trust God completely: "your Father knows that you need these things. Instead seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well." (Luke 12:30b-31).

The kingdom of God will bring a complete change on earth. The four beatitudes which, in all probability, formed the beginning of Jesus' preaching in Q make this very clear (Luke 6:20-23, cf. Matt. 5:3,6,4,11-12). The first three are addressed to the poor ("for yours is the kingdom of God"⁸), those who hunger and those who weep, but the fourth is directed to Jesus' followers who are hated and reviled because of Jesus. Other words about the kingdom are also oriented towards the disciples.

As in Paul, certain sayings in the Synoptic gospels deal with the ethical requirements for receiving a share in God's kingdom. Contrary to those mentioned by Paul, they are very radical. So, for example, Mark 9:47, "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell." Or read the story about the rich man who, in order to inherit eternal life, has to sell everything he possesses, and to give to the poor and follow Jesus (Mark 10:17-31 par. Matt. 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30). Followers of Jesus are indeed sent out "carrying no purse, no bag and no sandals" (Luke 10:4, see 1-12 par. Matt. 9:37-10:16).⁹ Another word of Jesus makes clear that one has to receive the kingdom of God like a child as a present, utterly without pretensions, in order to enter it (Mark 10:13-16 par. Luke 18:15-17, cf. Matt. 19:13-15; 18:3).¹⁰ This group of sayings presupposes a radical interpretation of God's will, generally considered to be typical of Jesus, who always asks for the real intention of the commandments of the Torah and who critically reviews the rules of men based upon them.¹¹

An important image for the coming kingdom is that of a banquet. A Q-saying (Luke 13:28-29 par. Matt. 8:11-12) speaks about a feast in the kingdom of God where many people, coming from all corners of the earth, will sit down together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Woe to those who will find themselves excluded!¹² In the description of the Last Supper in Mark 14:22-25 we find a related saying: "Truly I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (v. 25).¹³ The wine symbolizes the joy of the kingdom in which Jesus will share; the kingdom is clearly expected to arrive in the near future. I would suggest that this promise of a future feast with unexpected guests may be connected with the stories of Jesus' meals with tax collectors and other men and women who were not reckoned among the righteous (Mark 2:14-17 par. Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32, and Luke 7:34 par. Matt. 11:19, cf. Luke 15:1; 19:1-10). A saying found only in Matt. 21:31 fits here admirably: "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and harlots go into the kingdom before you."

In Mark and Q is this future kingdom ever connected with the parousia? As far as I can see, only in Mark 9:1 which follows 8:38, and this connection has to be attributed to Mark's redactional activity. Mark 8:38 speaks about the Son of man coming in glory with the holy angels; in 9:1 Jesus declares: "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."¹⁴ Mark 8:38 is to be linked with 13:26 and 14:62; the notion of the future coming of the Son of man figures prominently in a number of sayings of Jesus. With a number of British scholars I consider it likely that Jesus himself used a veiled reference to "one like a Son of man" in Dan. 7:13-14 in order to define his own mission.¹⁵ Also the saying in Mark 9:1 emphasizing that the kingdom will come during the lifetime of at least some of the followers present may very well go back to Jesus.¹⁶ Only later were the notions parousia and kingdom of God directly connected, by Mark and by Paul in 1 Corinthians - though, as we have seen, Paul did not do this in his earlier letter, 1 Thessalonians.

Looking back for a moment, we may say, I believe, that the collection of sayings in Mark and Q discussed so far shows a remarkable coherence. At several points a connection may be made with words of Jesus that can otherwise be established to belong to the core of his mission; so we are allowed to conclude that these sayings about the kingdom represent Jesus' stand in the matter.

There is, however, still a last group of important sayings, speaking about the coming of the kingdom of God in connection with Jesus' mission in the present. As is well-known, they have provoked an enormous discussion in this century, particularly in connection with C. H. Dodd's interpretation of them in his *The Parables of the Kingdom* of 1935.¹⁷ There is no need to repeat here the various points of view; let me just try to indicate the main issues involved. Mark characterizes Jesus' mission by means of the first words spoken by Jesus in his gospel: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near; repent and believe in the gospel" (1:15). The same message is found in Q, where it is to be announced by Jesus' disciples sent out to preach and to heal: "The kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10:9 par. Matt. 10:7 [without "to you"]¹⁸). The Greek verb used here should be interpreted as "is at hand".¹⁹ The kingdom is not yet present, but it has drawn so near that it is all-important for those who hear the message. Hence Mark's "the time is fulfilled" and "repent, and believe in the gospel."

A Q-saying (Luke 11:20 par. Matt. 12:28) goes one step further. In one of Jesus' replies to the remark that he casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he says: "But if it is by the finger of God²⁰ that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." The battle between God and Satan has already begun. In what follows Satan is compared to a strong man guarding his own palace, but defeated by one who is stronger than he. The same image is found in the parallel passage in Mark 3:22-27, where the expression "kingdom of God" does not occur, but Jesus' activity in destroying Satan's kingdom receives a similar emphasis: "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (vv. 23-24).

The kingdom of God is at hand; Jesus announces it and calls for repentance. His radical ethic has to be understood in this context. In his healing of the diseases, his exorcisms, his concern for those who are on the wrong way, his offer of a new perspective to the poor and distressed, and his assurance to all that God as a Father will hear their prayer, he not only announces his kingdom but also inaugurates it. This is also borne out by the difficult Q-saying Luke 16:16 par. Matt. 11:12-13 about the kingdom coming violently,²¹ and by the Parable of the Mustard Seed found in Mark and Q (Mark 4:31-33, Luke 13:18-19 par. Matt. 13:31-32) and the accompanying parables in Mark 4:26-29 and in Q (Luke 13:20-21 par. Matt. 13:33).²² I have no time to discuss those passages here. I shall sum up what I think is clear in all texts belonging to this last group. All emphasis is on the complete break-through of the kingdom of God in the near future, and the radical definitive change resulting from it. But this event is even more eagerly awaited because the dynamic presence of the kingdom is already manifest in Jesus' message and actions - at least for those who hear and see and accept it.²³

5. Jesus' sayings on the Kingdom of God and other elements in his preaching

If this was the main thrust of Jesus' proclamation of God's rule as king, and if this proclamation constituted the core of his preaching, a number of questions arise concerning the relationship between this core and other important elements of Jesus' message. Two in particular I want to mention. First: the fact that Jesus assigned to himself a central role in the coming of God's rule on earth, not only as a herald but as one who inaugurated it, implies a Christology. To what extent did this lead to the use of explicit Christological designations in the circle of his disciples during his wanderings in Galilee and Judaea, or in his own views about his mission?²⁴

Another important question is how Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God was related to his views on his suffering, death and vindication by God. One thing seems to be certain to me: He experienced rejection and opposition and must have reckoned with his violent death. His message about the kingdom implies

that he was convinced that God would vindicate him. His message about the complete break-through of God's sovereign rule in the near future would be proven true; he and his followers would have a share in it. It is difficult to make out whether he believed that his vindication and the complete realization of God's rule would coincide, or whether there would be an interim period of some length. Our solution of this problem will depend on the assessment of the authenticity of individual sayings, which remains a very subjective undertaking. I am inclined to think that Jesus reckoned with an interim period (see e.g. Mark 9:1, 14:25), but expected it to be so short that he did not feel the need to give exhortations to his followers for that future period other than those he had already given them for their present task as disciples.²⁵

II. Contemporary Ideas about the Kingdom of God

1. Introduction

To what extent can these and other questions be brought nearer to an answer by comparing the statements in the earliest layers of Christian tradition with contemporary Jewish ideas about God's kingship and rule? Odo Camponovo has recently given a very useful survey of those ideas in his *Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes in den frühjüdischen Schriften*²⁶, studying them in the contexts of the writings in which they occur and emphasizing their variety. He rightly remarks that there is no such thing as a Jewish doctrine of the kingdom of God; moreover, the theme of God's kingship, in the present and the future, is certainly not a major one in Jewish literature, as it is not in the Hebrew Bible or in the Septuagint. God *is* king and his rule will be fully manifested in the future. So much is certain. But the faithful who meditate upon it and write about it come up with a great many associations and images. Where these are combined with pictures of God's definitive intervention in the future, apocalyptic and otherwise, the result is again a great variety of statements and images. The best we can do is comparing individual Jewish texts with individual Christian ones, particularly those which are most likely to represent Jesus' own views, and ask what light the Jewish texts shed on the early Christian ones. In doing so we may find that such comparisons

yield not only analogies, but also bring to light points that are typical of early Christianity.

2. *The Psalms of Solomon*

Let us start by reviewing some interesting features of the Psalms of Solomon, a Jewish writing from Palestine, the final version of which is commonly dated about 45-40 B.C. These psalms, stemming from pious, law-abiding circles in and around Jerusalem, praise God's kingship in a number of places. Psalm 2, looking back on Pompey's ignominious death, describes his pride and self-exaltation in contrast to the genuine might of God.

He said: I will be lord of land and sea;
And he did not recognise that God is great,
Mighty in his great strength.
He is king in the heavens,
And judges kings and dominions.
It is he who raises me up to glory,
And lays low the proud in eternal destruction, in dishonour.
Because they knew him not.
And now, behold, princes of the earth, the judgement of
the Lord.
For he is a great king, and righteous, judging the earth that
is under heaven (vv. 29-32).²⁷

Psalm 17 stresses that God is king for ever. It begins: "Lord, you yourself are our king for ever and ever" (v. 1), and ends with the proclamation: "The Lord himself is our king for ever and ever" (v. 46).²⁸ Based on this conviction is the firm expectation that God will intervene shortly and bring a change in the fate of Israel by sending a king from the family of David.

"We shall hope in God, our saviour,
For the might of our God is for ever with mercy,
and the kingdom of our God is for ever over the nations
in judgement.
You, O Lord, chose David as king over Israel,
And you swore to him concerning his seed for ever,

That his kingship would never fail before you" (vv. 3-4).

There is a natural connection between God's kingship in the present, demonstrated in his judgement on his enemies and his mercy and help for those who obey him (see e.g. Ps.Sol. 2:33-37), and the final demonstration of his rule, expected in the near future by the pious in distress. In one case, Ps.Sol. 5:18-19, it is even not quite clear whether the present or the future is in view. The most likely translation of these verses is:

"Those who fear the Lord rejoice in good things
In your royal rule your goodness is on Israel.
Blessed is the glory of the Lord, for he is king."

Many commentators, however, follow Von Gebhardt's suggestion that the indicative should be changed to an optative, thus bringing the ending of this psalm into line with that of other psalms (4:24; 11:8; 12:4-6; cf. 17:45-46; 18:5).²⁹ If that proposal is accepted, v. 18 originally spoke about the future: "May those who fear the Lord rejoice... Let your goodness be on Israel in your royal rule..."

Psalm 17, then, speaks about the definitive manifestation of the rule of God, the king, in the actions of the awaited king from the seed of David. Here (and in a somewhat different way in Psalm 18³⁰) the heavenly king acts through an earthly representative. We should note, however, that elsewhere in this writing the future intervention of God is mentioned without human intermediaries (7:10; 8:27-31; 9:8-11; 10:5-8; 11; 12:6; 14:9-10; 15:12-13). For the expectation of these Psalms it is essential that God proves his mercy and his power by intervening in the course of events, but it is not essential that he uses an ideal Davidic king or someone else appointed by him.³¹ The Psalms of Solomon are, in this respect, representative of Jewish expectation in general.

The prophecy of Nathan to David recorded in 2 Sam. 7:4-17 (see esp. vv. 11-14) and the many Old Testament texts related to it³² lie at the basis of the expectation of the Davidic king in Psalm 17. This is evident in v. 4 already quoted, as well in v. 21:

“Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David,
And the time you have (fore)seen, to rule over Israel your servant.”

We may also mention v. 32:

“He (will be) a righteous king over them, instructed by God,
And there is no unrighteousness among them in his days.
For all are holy, and their king an anointed (of the) Lord.”³³

The activities of this king are described in vv. 21-44. Many Old Testament themes and texts are alluded to and a very variegated and not always consistent picture is the result.³⁴ This anointed son of David is not only a warrior who destroys God’s enemies and purges Jerusalem from the nations in order to make a place for “the tribes of the people made holy by the Lord its God” (so v. 26). In accordance with Deut. 17:16-17,

“He will not put his trust in horse and rider and bow,
Nor will he multiply for himself gold and silver for war” (v. 33).

In fact, he will be a prefect servant of God:

“The Lord himself is his king, the hope of him who is strong through hope in God” (v. 34, cf. v. 39).

and

“His words are more refined than the finest gold,
In the assemblies will he judge the tribes of a sanctified people.
His words are as the words of holy ones in the midst of sanctified peoples” (v. 43).

In the overall picture of the anointed one presented in Ps.Sol. 17 the spiritual aspects dominate (see also v. 37 referring to Isa. 11:1-5). He will govern over a holy people. All centres around

Israel and Jerusalem, but the essential thing is that all men and women serve God in righteousness and holiness under the king’s leadership.

Here the final manifestation of God’s rule takes place through the good offices of a Davidic king, “an anointed of the Lord” who remains completely dependent on God. In Ps.Sol. 17 the spiritual side of his rule is strongly emphasized. With regard to the early Christian view of the kingdom of God this means that it is not at all strange that it is closely connected with the person of Jesus and that an eschatology focusing on God’s kingdom led to some form of Christology. Given the centrality of Jesus’ words and actions it may even have called it forth - certainly in the case of Jesus’ followers, perhaps also in the case of Jesus himself. The origin and development of the use of the designation “anointed one/Messiah” for Jesus is very difficult to trace, but on the basis of the analogy in Ps.Sol. 17 we may not exclude the possibility that it was the belief in the inauguration of the kingdom of God in Jesus’ mission that led to the conviction that he was a wise and perfectly obedient anointed one from the seed of David, led by the Spirit; this conviction may have originated very early, perhaps even in Jesus’ own mind.³⁵

Finally one other aspect of the expectation in the Psalms of Solomon may be stressed. The author(s) of Psalm 17 expect(s) that God will intervene quickly:

“May God hasten³⁶ upon Israel his mercy,
He will deliver us from the uncleanness of unholy enemies”
(v. 45).

The sins of the sinners and the persecution of God’s faithful are described at length; unrighteousness prevails (vv. 5-20). For one who believes in God, and is convinced that God alone is king forever, it is evident that God cannot postpone his intervention any longer. Here, and elsewhere in similar Jewish texts, the expectation is one of the imminent reversal of fortune. In the evils of the present time the faithful detect God’s chastising and punishing hand. God is already exercising judgement and therefore one may expect a definitive turn in the fate of the pious in Israel. In the decisive events that determine their lives negatively, God’s

servants put their trust in an imminent positive intervention of God. This fervent expectation enables the pious to persevere in being faithful to God's will in adverse circumstances. Future and present are inextricably linked. Contrary to the sayings of Jesus, however, the Psalms of Solomon reserve God's acts of mercy for the future; in the present only his judgements are in evidence.

3. *The Assumption of Moses*

We now turn to the Assumption of Moses,³⁷ a writing commonly dated in the beginning of the first century C.E.³⁸ Here we find a variant in the eschatological scenario that sheds an interesting light on the mission of Jesus as viewed in the earliest strands of the Christian tradition. We shall focus our attention on chapters 9 and 10.

The central figure in chapter 9 is a man from the tribe of Levi called Taxo (a name never yet satisfactorily explained), who with his seven sons is representative of the pious in Israel for whom Moses' words in this writing are intended. He makes his appearance at a time when the ruthless "king of the kings of the earth" (8:1), who executes God's revenge and displays God's anger, rages against Israel as its last and final enemy, after "the king from the East" in 3:1 and "the mighty king of the West" in 6:8. This last mighty king, "a power of great force" (again 8:1) tortures and persecutes the faithful, trying to force them to transgress the commandments. Circumcision is forbidden, idolatry and blasphemy are enforced, even in the temple.

In his speech in 9:2-7 Taxo views these horrible events as "another revenge (that) has happened to the people, cruel, impure, and a punishment without mercy, and exceeding the first one" (v. 2). Israel has suffered much more than impious Gentiles ever had to suffer. "For what nation, or what country, or what impious people who oppose the Lord and who have done many outrages, have suffered so many calamities as have befallen us?" (v. 3). Never have Taxo and his sons, nor their parents, nor their forefathers transgressed the commandments of the Lord. Here lies their strength. Hence Taxo suggests that, after a fast of three days, he

and his sons take refuge in a cave. "Let us die rather than transgress the commandments of the Lord of lords, the God of our fathers," he says, and he continues, "For if we shall do this and die, our blood will be revenged before the Lord" (vv. 6-7).

Taxo's speech, reminiscent of the "testament of Mattathias" in 1 Macc. 2:49-70, views Israel's calamities as a severe punishment by God, a punishment far exceeding that meted out to any of the nations that have sinned against God. The hidden presupposition could be that this cannot go on: Israel will soon have been punished enough. After all, the author of 2 Maccabees assures his readers in a crucial passage (6:12-17), God punishes his people to discipline, not to destroy them; it is a sign of kindness that he does so before the end, when the nations will undergo eternal punishment, having completed the measure of their sins. As we read in Ass.Mos. 12:12-13, "But it is impossible that he will entirely exterminate them and leave them behind. For God will go out, who foresees everything for ever, and his covenant stands firm."

For the pious in Israel only one course is possible: they have to continue serving God. If they do so, and suffer a violent death, they will be revenged before the Lord.³⁹ Many commentators⁴⁰ have explained Taxo's behaviour as an effort to provoke God's vengeance, to make it impossible for him not to intervene, because the righteous in solidarity with their people increase the disproportion between sin and punishment. This, however, means an overinterpretation of Taxo's words that voice the assurance that the suffering righteous will be vindicated by God. We are reminded of the seven brothers martyred in 2 Maccabees 7 who declare: "We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers" (v. 2), and act upon the conviction: "The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion over us, as Moses declared in his song which bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, "And he will have compassion on his servants" (v. 6, cf. Deut. 32:36).

For the author of the Assumption of Moses the king of kings and Taxo live at the end of times. He, therefore, expected the vindication of the suffering righteous to coincide with God's

definitive intervention in the affairs of the world.⁴¹ This final intervention is described in 10:1-10, of which vv. 1-2 form the introduction:

“And then his kingdom will appear throughout his entire creation,
And then the devil will come to his end,
And sorrow will be led away with him.
Then the hands of the messenger will be filled
Who is established upon high,
Who at once will revenge them against their enemies.”

God's definitive intervention is in v. 1 described as the appearance of his kingdom. Enmity against God, personified by the devil, and sorrow will disappear. In the following verses the appearance of the kingdom is described as a theophany. “For the Heavenly One will arise from his royal throne⁴² and he will come out of his holy habitation with indignation and wrath because of his sons”, we read in v. 3 and v. 7 adds, “For the highest God will rise, the eternal Holy One, and he will come openly to punish the nations and to destroy their idols.” In fact, the announcement in Deut. 32:43 will become true: “He avenges the blood of his servants⁴³ and takes vengeance on his adversaries, and makes the expiation for the land of his people.”

V. 2 introduces a figure who is called “nuntius”, that is “messenger.” He is obviously a priest, for the expression “to fill someone's hand(s)” that is used in connection with him is a technical term for the consecration of priests.⁴⁴ He is often thought to be an angel, serving in the heavenly sanctuary and now appointed to revenge the people.⁴⁵ Recently, however, Johannes Tromp has pointed out⁴⁶ that it would be rather strange that an angel in heaven would only at that moment be consecrated priest. He makes an interesting case for Taxo - a man from the tribe of Levi, as we noted earlier - as nuntius, exalted to heaven and consecrated priest on high, thereby vindicated by God and joining in God's revenge on his enemies on behalf of his servants/sons.

If this is true, there is an interesting analogy between Taxo and

Jesus: both are completely obedient to God and exalted and vindicated by him: both are instrumental in bringing about the final manifestation of God's sovereign rule on earth and, in fact, in his entire creation. In the case of Taxo exaltation and arrival of the kingdom of God seem to coincide: the earliest traditions about Jesus are not entirely clear on this point, as we have seen.

A detailed analysis would reveal a number of differences; for example, Jesus is clearly not a man from the tribe of Levi and his early followers were not a priestly community, as the group behind the Assumption of Moses probably was. The most striking difference obviously lies in the different assessment of the position of the devil. “Tunc zabolus finem habebit” says Ass.Mos. 10:1; there is near verbal agreement with Mark 3:26 (Vulg.) “(Satanas) non potest stare sed finem habet.” For that reason this verse from the Assumption of Moses is often quoted in commentaries on this verse in Mark. But there is one decisive difference: in the saying of Jesus we do not find a future but a present; in Jesus' exorcistic activity the devil has already come to an end. The definitive break-through has not yet been effected, but God's rule is already manifest in Jesus' actions. Taxo in the Assumption of Moses can only hold out in adverse circumstances: the deliverance, though near, is yet to come. Jesus, according to early Christian tradition, has already made an attack on Satan, and made a beginning with freeing people from Satan's bonds.

4. *Josephus on Prophets in the first century C.E.*

Many scholars have looked for parallels to the sayings of Jesus which enunciate the dynamic presence of the future kingdom of God in the words and actions of Jesus, particularly Luke 11:20 par. Matt. 12:28, and have failed to find any. In the case of a good number of scholars this has led to the conclusion that in this respect Jesus was unique because he differed from all his predecessors and contemporaries. Was he really?

In his *Jesus and Judaism* E. P. Sanders has devoted much attention to this matter.⁴⁷ After rightly stressing that the failure to produce parallels should lead to the sober conclusion that the notion of the

dynamic presence of the future kingdom is “otherwise unattested”, and that it should not give rise to a theologically motivated discussion of Jesus’ unique self-consciousness, he continues:

“We have virtually no evidence about what other first-century Jewish healers and preachers thought about the significance of their own work. We do have, of course, some information about John the Baptist, but it can hardly be thought that we know the full range of what he thought and said. Can we be sure that neither Theudas (Josephus *AJXX*. 97-9) nor the Egyptian (*AJXX*. 169-72; *BJ* II. 261-3) thought that the kingdom was breaking in with him as God’s viceroy? I do not think we can. In fact, it seems likely that such prophets thought that God was at work in them and would bring in his kingdom through them.”⁴⁸

Sanders’s statement asks for further investigation and comment. We should note that he only puts forward a hypothesis and tells us that he thinks it is a likely one. He is rightly cautious. Our main (and often only) source of information concerning popular leaders of various types in the century preceding the Jewish-Roman conflict of 66-70 C.E. is Flavius Josephus, who gives a biased account of the events leading up to that war. On the basis of his material modern scholars have given different pictures of the figures and groups opposed to the Romans and the Jewish establishment cooperating with them. On the whole I prefer the approach advocated by R. A. Horsley and J. S. Hanson in their *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs*⁴⁹ to that found in M. Hengel’s classical book on the Zealots.⁵⁰ Horsley and Hanson stress the social and economic causes of unrest and revolt, and try to show that the various leaders and groups reacted differently because they were inspired by different popular Jewish traditions. Hengel gives a comprehensive and synthetic view of what he calls the Jewish freedom movement, trying to show how it was inspired by a complete trust in God and a radical zeal for his Law.

However, also Horsley and Hanson have to read between Josephus’s lines when they ask for the ultimate motives of the popular leaders under discussion, and sometimes there is room

for a different opinion. It is questionable, I think, to speak of “popular messianic uprisings at the death of Herod” when referring to the exploits of Judas, son of Hizkia, Simon and Athronges, and about “royal pretenders and messianic movements during the Jewish Revolt” in connection with Menahem, the son of Judas the Galilean, and Simon bar Giora.⁵¹ Neither “the messiahs” in the title of Horsley and Hanson’s book, nor, for obvious reasons, “the bandits” can help us to shed light on Jesus and his movement. But what about “the prophets”?

Horsley and Hanson rightly distinguish between “oracular prophets” and “the prophetic leaders of popular movements”. It is to the reports on the latter that we should turn, just as E.P. Sanders did,⁵² but there is not much to go on. If we pass over the related stories about the Samaritan prophet leading his people up Mount Gerizim, who was killed by the troops of Pontius Pilate (*Ant.* 18.85-87) and about Jonathan the Weaver in Cyrene a few years after the end of the Jewish War (*J.W.* 7.437-442), we have only the stories about Theudas (*Ant.* 20.97-99) and the Egyptian prophet (*J.W.* 2.261-263; *Ant.* 20.169-172) plus a story about an anonymous prophet under Festus (*Ant.* 20.188). Josephus’s general comments on these prophets are important for our purpose. He calls them “imposters and deceivers” who call upon large groups of people to follow them into the desert. “For they said that they would show them unmistakable wonders and signs done in accordance to God’s plan” (so *Ant.*) or, in the words of *J.W.*, “they persuaded the multitude to act like madmen and led them out into the desert in the belief that God would give them signs of liberation.”

The prophets described here are able to mobilize large groups of people. They do not aim at armed rebellion; only in the version of his story of the Egyptian prophet in *J.W.* Josephus speaks of plans “to overpower the Roman garrison, to set himself up as a tyrant of the people, employing those who poured in with him as his bodyguard” (*J.W.* 2.262). Military force is used against these prophets in all cases, clearly because they create much unrest and upheaval. The crowds following the prophets clearly had very little to lose and were only too ready “to participate in the divine

transformation of a world gone awry into the society of justice, willed and ruled by God."⁵³ They expect an imminent intervention by God, which would bring liberation and "rest from troubles."⁵⁴

The ideas and terminology used here ("the desert", "signs", "wonders and signs", "salvation", "liberation") indicate that the prophets concerned spoke of God's intervention in terms of Exodus and Conquest. Had the Lord not heard the voice of his people, and seen their toil and their oppression; had he not brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with signs and wonders, and had he not made them enter a land flowing with milk and honey (cf. Deut. 26:7-9)? It is significant that Theudas promised that at his command the river Jordan would be parted and would provide an easy passage for the multitude. We are reminded of the exodus through the Red Sea (Exod. 14) and the parting of the waters of the Jordan by Joshua at the entrance into the promised land (Josh. 3). Did Theudas want to lead a new exodus, with God liberating his people from Roman slavery, and/or to lead them into the land of milk and honey - or was his action only a preliminary one, bringing people to the desert in order to make an entirely new start, waiting confidently on God's intervention? The Egyptian prophet claimed to be an agent of God in the same way as Joshua in the great battle of Jericho (Josh. 6), for he promised "that at his command the walls of Jerusalem would fall down" - that is, at least, what Josephus tells us in *Ant.* 20.170.

In all these cases the prophets claim to be guided by God in a special way. Their message centres around an imminent intervention by God, which would grant a new existence to the poor and distressed in Israel who accept the message of the prophet and trust God completely. What is expected to come in the near future completely determines life in the present; people give up the little they have and follow the prophet. But did Theudas, the Egyptian or any other prophet claim that in what he said and did the kingdom of God was already breaking in? Perhaps he did - but we do not possess any information about it. All we can say is that they were convinced that a new beginning

would soon be made, and that then one saving act of God would follow the other. As P. W. Barnett has put it: "Once the 'sign' is effected the fulfilment will inexorably follow, and soon afterwards. It is suggested that these Prophets believed that if only a 'sign' of the Exodus-Conquest could be performed, then the wheels of God would be set in motion for a re-run of His Great Saving Act."⁵⁵

It would seem, then, that we do not find a parallel to the notion of the dynamic presence of the kingdom of God in Jesus' words and actions in Jewish contemporary writings as well as in reports about prophetic figures in the first century C.E.

5. Summary of part II

The findings in the second part of this lecture may be summarized as follows:

- a. It is not difficult to find parallels for an expectation of an imminent definitive intervention of God that determines the behaviour of the faithful in the present. That present was seen as the time before the End, and it was experienced as a desperate situation crying out for action on the part of God. Many believed that God was active in the present; they also believed that he was punishing Israel in order to discipline it, or saw his hand in the death of enemies, but no one seems to have detected any sign of the presence of the coming definitive salvation/liberation.
- b. A human intermediary is not an essential element in the eschatological process. But Ps.Sol. 17 shows that one could focus one's expectations on an ideal anointed son of David. This psalm, like the others in the collection, is a product of a group of pious Israelites; there is no reason to think that they had an eye on a possible candidate for that office, either in or outside their circle. The prophets described by Josephus, however, played a central part in their own expectation and that of their followers; they were believed to be playing a role as a new Moses or a new Joshua.
- c. The mysterious Taxo is a borderline case. He is a leading representative, not necessarily historical, of a group of righteous

suffering servants of God. He expects vindication, but not a central role in God's intervention. But, if the new interpretation of Ass. Mos. 10:2 is right, he is not only vindicated and exalted, but also appointed as a priestly messenger instrumental in God's revenge on his enemies and the realization of God's sovereign rule on earth.

The picture of Taxo given by the Assumption of Moses helps us to understand some essential elements in early Christian, if not Jesus' own, views on Jesus' death, resurrection/exaltation and the final manifestation of God's kingdom. It does not enable us to reconstruct the exact relationship between personal exaltation and the final manifestation of the kingdom in Jesus' preaching.

d. We have found no parallel to the notion of a dynamic presence of the future kingdom in the words and actions of Jesus. We should not attach too much weight to this fact. The application of what is commonly called "the criterion of dissimilarity" in the search for the "historical Jesus" is beset with difficulties. The very moment something similar crops up from an unexpected quarter, our conclusions are no longer tenable. Let us keep, therefore, to the term "still unattested elsewhere" and not apply the categories "typical" or "unique". The search must go on.

Appendix: Some Remarks on the Kingdom of God in the Writings found at Qumran

O. Camponovo⁵⁶ has assembled and discussed all the texts which are relevant to our subject in the documents found at Qumran. They are few and most of them liturgical. God is worshipped as king, particularly in texts referring to the heavenly liturgy.⁵⁷ 1QM exalts God's kingship several times in the context of the description of the eschatological war. So we read in a prayer in 1QM 12:3:⁵⁸

"Thou hast recorded for them, with the graving tool of life,
the favours of [Thy] blessings and the Covenant of Thy
peace.

that Thou mayest reign [over them] for ever and ever
and throughout all the eternal ages."

Or in 1QM 12:7-9a:

"For thou art [terrible], O God, in the glory of Thy kingdom,
and the congregation of Thy Holy Ones is among us for
everlasting succour.

We will despise kings, we will mock and scorn the mighty;
for our Lord is holy, and the King of Glory is with us
together with the Holy Ones.

Valiant [warriors] of the angelic hosts are among our
numbered men,

and the Hero of war⁵⁹ is with our congregation;

the host of His spirits is with our foot-soldiers and
horsemen."

The prayer ends as a hymn, of which the final lines in 12:15-16 are:

"Shout for joy, [O daughters of] my people!

Deck yourselves with glorious jewels

and rule over [the kingdoms of the nations!]

Sovereignty shall be to the Lord]

and everlasting dominion to Israel."

The last part of this text has been restored with the help of 1QM
6:6:

"And sovereignty shall be to the God of Israel,

and he shall accomplish mighty deeds by the saints of His
people."

God the king and his angels will help the armies of the faithful in
the final battle. His triumph will be theirs; "sovereignty will be to
the Lord, and everlasting dominion to Israel."

Among the exegetical documents at Qumran two have to be mentioned especially. First there is 11QMelch⁶⁰ speaking about vengeance and liberation brought about by Melchizedek, portrayed as a heavenly figure. In lines 15-16 we find a quotation from Isa. 52:7, a text which, with its combination of "to bring good tidings" and "your God is king", may lie behind Mark 1:14-15 and related texts.⁶¹ Isa. 52:7 is interpreted in the following lines, but unfortunately lines 25-26 where the last clause is explained are badly damaged. Only the words "your god that is" are legible in line 25. The words "is king" (*mlk*) are not taken up, probably because in what followed "god" (*lwhym*) was identified as Melchizedek (*mlkysdq*). Hence Vermes translates "And your ELOHIM is [Melchizedek, who will save them from] the hand of

Satan.”⁶²

The use of Exod. 15:17-18 in 4QFlorilegium is interesting: after a quotation from 2 Sam. 7:10 the text continues, “This is the house which [He will build] for him in the latter days, as it is written in the book of [Moses], “The sanctuary of the Lord which Thy hands have established. The Lord will reign for ever and ever” (4QFlor. 1:2-3).⁶³ In the following lines it is made clear that “the sanctuary” is a sanctuary of men, the holy community at Qumran. The clause “the Lord shall reign for ever and ever” seems either to be neglected or applied to the life of the community. But just as in 2 Sam. 7:10-17, “house” not only applies to the temple to be built by Solomon by also to David’s dynasty, in 1:10-13 an abbreviated quotation from 2 Sam. 7:12-14 is interpreted as a reference to “the shoot of David who will stand with the Interpreter of the Law who [will rule] in Zion in the latter days.” After a quotation from Amos 9:11 the “shoot”’s function is specified; he will appear to save Israel.⁶⁴

Here the relationship (if any) between God’s rule and that of the Davidic king is not spelled out; nor is it anywhere else. 4QPBless, in a commentary on Gen. 49:10, twice mentions “the covenant of kingship” in connection with “the shoot of David” who is also called “the Messiah of Righteousness.” In the Blessing for the Prince of the Congregation (1QSb 5:20-29) the Master declares that God “shall renew for them the Covenant of the Community that he may establish the kingdom of His people for ever (line 21, cf. 23; transl. Vermes). It is not certain, however, whether here God’s or the king’s people is envisaged; the two interpretations are, of course, not mutually exclusive.

All this does not contribute very much to our present investigation. Other Qumran evidence, however, has been adduced in connection with the important question of the dynamic presence of the future kingdom in the words and work of Jesus. In his recent *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*⁶⁵ G. R. Beasley-Murray has again reminded us of H. W. Kuhn’s study of the Qumran Hymns,⁶⁶ in which he found that the Qumran community, living in ardent expectation of coming events, saw itself as participating in eternal

life, joining the angels in heavenly worship, and possessing the Spirit and knowledge. Beasley-Murray thinks that this enables us “to see that the juxtaposition of present and future notions of the eschatological kingdom is not so foreign to Jewish eschatology as was once thought” (p. 51). The step from the passages in the Hymns to the Synoptic texts about Jesus is, however, a large one. H. W. Kuhn himself emphasized the differences. The tension at Qumran between present and future is to be explained by the combination of apocalyptic expectation on the one hand, and the priestly consciousness and the equation of temple and community on the other. It is not strange that the experience of the presence of salvation is specifically connected with worship and cult. Anyone looking for parallels in early Christianity should examine the notion of the activity of the eschatological presence of the Spirit (connected with that of the Lordship of the risen Jesus) in the early Christian communities, rather than turn to Jesus’ claim that the kingdom of God is present in his person and in his work (see Kuhn’s appendix, pp. 189-204).⁶⁷

- 1 Of the many recent studies devoted to the topic "Jesus and the kingdom" I may mention:
 G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids/Exeter: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1986).
 B. D. Chilton, *God in Strength: Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom* (SNTU B1; Freistadt: F. Plöchl, 1979).
 H. Merklein, *Die Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip. Untersuchung zur Ethik Jesu* (FzB 34; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1978).
 H. Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft* (SBS 111; Stuttgart: Kath. Bibelwerk, 1983).
 N. Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1963).
 N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1967).
 N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom. Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).
 J. Schlosser, *Le règne de Dieu dans les diis de Jésus I-II* (Etudes Bibliques; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1980). H. Schürmann, "Das Zeugnis der Redenquelle für die Basilea - Verkündigung Jesu", in: *Gottes Reich - Jesu Geschick. Jesu ureigener Tod im Licht seiner Basilea - Verkündigung* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder Verlag, 1983), 65-152.
- 2 See my *Christology in Context. The Earliest Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988) and *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah* (New Haven, Yale U. P., 1991).
- 3 For Paul the activity of the Holy Spirit is a sign of the approaching definitive realization of God's promises: Rom. 8:1-27; 1 Cor. 12:1-13; 2 Cor. 3:1-18; 5:5; Gal. 4:4-6; 5:5, 13-26.
- 4 On this see e.g. M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, 87-88.
- 5 See *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, chapter 3 "Jesus' Mission and His Death on the Cross."
- 6 Cf. Matt. 6:9-10; the shorter text in Luke is more likely to represent the text of Q.
- 7 See *Jesus, the Servant-Messiah*, 72-75.
- 8 Cf. Jas. 2:5.
- 9 Cf. also Luke 9:57-62, mainly consisting of Q-texts: family duties, such as burying one's father, have to give way to the following of the Son of man. On wandering preachers see G. Theissen, *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* (WUNT 19; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1979), esp. pp. 79-

141 and 201-231.

- 10 Other related texts are: Mark 12:34 (and also 15:43?); Luke 13:24 par. Matt. 7:13-14; Matt. 7:21; 25:21, 23, 34; Acts 14:22; John 3:3,5. Matt. 16:19 speaks about the keys of the kingdom entrusted to Peter; in 23:13 Jesus reproaches the scribes and the Pharisees for having shut the kingdom of heaven against men, and not entering it themselves (cf. Luke 11:52).
- 11 See *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, 65 with a reference to E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1985), especially chapter 9 (pp. 245-269) in Part III "Conflict and Death".
- 12 In Luke the "workers of iniquity" (vs. 27) are excluded; Matthew speaks of "the sons of the kingdom", i.e. the official Israel that rejects Jesus (cf. 21:43-46). In this connection also Luke 22:28-30 par. Matt. 19:28 may be mentioned. In the version of the saying found in Luke Jesus speaks of the eating and drinking of the disciples in his kingdom. See also Luke 14:15 and Luke 14:16-24 par. Matt. 22:1-14.
- 13 Cf. Luke 22:15-18 and the reference to the coming of the Lord in Paul's account of the Last Supper and instructions for the celebration of the Table of the Lord in 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
- 14 Matt. 16:27-28 speaks of the coming of the Son of man, in the glory of the Father and "in his kingdom". See also Matt. 20:21 "in your kingdom" instead of "in your glory" in Mark 10:37.
- 15 See *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, 50-54, referring to C. K. Barrett, M. D. Hooker and G. N. Stanton. Only Matthew speaks of the *parousia* of the Son of man, see 24:(3), 27, 37, 39.
- 16 See also Mark 13:30 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place." This saying may not be played off against the earlier saying, as if these two texts represent two different stages in the short term expectation of the kingdom. "This generation" refers to "all that are alive" without envisaging each person in that category individually.
- 17 A revised edition (London: Nisbet and Co., 1936) was reprinted many times.
- 18 Cf. Luke 10:11; 9:2. Mark 6:7, 12-13 refer (implicitly) to Mark 1:15, but mention only the preaching of repentance.
- 19 See the parallel use of the term in Matt. 26:45; Luke 21:8, 20; Rom. 13:12; Jas. 5:8; 1 Peter 4:7. The expression "the kingdom of God (of heaven) is at hand" is found also in the clearly redactional passages Matt. 3:2; Luke 10:11; 21:31.

- 20 Cf. Exod. 8:19. Matt. reads "by the Spirit of God."
- 21 The differences between Luke and Matthew make reconstruction of the original Q-saying a hazardous undertaking. I think that *biazetai* in Matthew is more likely to be original than *euaggelizetai* in Luke; in the second half of the saying Matthew gives an explanation of what is found in Luke (who is therefore probably nearer to Q). *Biazetai* should twice be interpreted as a medium; it is used *in bonam partem*.
- 22 See in Mark also the Parable of the Sower and its interpretation (4:3-9, 14-20) and the typically Markan verse 4:11 "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables."
- 23 Cf. Mark 10:14 "for to such belongs the kingdom of God" besides "entering it" in the following verse, and Luke 6:20 par. Matt. 5:3 "for yours is the kingdom of God" besides 6:21 par. Matt. 5:6, 4 "you shall be satisfied" and "you shall laugh." See also the texts in which Paul establishes a connection between the future kingdom and the present community (Rom. 14:17 and 1 Cor. 4:20). For a somewhat fuller treatment of the subject "Jesus and the kingdom of God" see also my Leiden farewell lecture *Jesus en het Koninkrijk Gods* (Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 25 januari 1991).
- 24 On this see also *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, Chapter 4.
- 25 See my discussion with Dale C. Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come. An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1987) in *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, especially pp. 61-62. There I quote H. F. Bayer, *Jesus' Predictions of Vindication and Resurrection. The Provenance, Meaning and Correlation of the Synoptic Predictions* (WUNT II 20; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), 256: "Jesus' anticipation of the parousia is clearly distinguishable from his anticipation of vindication and resurrection. While the question of near-expectation remains open, a clear distinction between the categories of parousia and resurrection is traceable to the earliest strands of tradition and discourages the idea of interchangeability of the two concepts." Compare also *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, 38-39.
- 26 OBO 58; Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1984. Camponovo sees it as his task to present the Jewish material and does not relate it to the statements found in Christian sources. On p. 1 he writes: "Die frühjüdischen Schriften sollen als eigenständige Werke mit ihren eigenen Botschaften zu ihrem Recht kommen und nicht als Steinbruch für religionsgeschichtliche Parallelen dienen."

- 27 Transl. S. P. Brock in H. F. D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 657.
- 28 Transl. M. de Jonge in M. de Jonge (ed.), *Outside the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1985), 168-175. See also my "The Expectation of the Future in the Psalms of Solomon", *Neotestamentica* 23 (1989), 93-117, now in M. de Jonge, *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Collected Essays* (NovTSup 63; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 3-27. In the references to this essay below, I shall give the page numbers of this volume.
- 29 O. von Gebhardt's edition *PSALMOI SOLOMONTOS. Die Psalmen Salomos zum ersten Male mit Benutzung der Athoshandschrift und des Codex Casanatensis herausgegeben...* (TU 13,2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1895) is still not replaced by a new one, but see now R. R. Hann, *The Manuscript History of the Psalms of Solomon* (SCS 13; Chico CA: Scholars Press, 1982). Von Gebhardt changed *euphrantbeiēsan* to *euphrantbeiēsan*. On this matter see O. Camponovo, *Königtum*, 216-218 who lists the opinions of various other commentators. S. P. Brock in *The Apocryphal Old Testament* follows Von Gebhardt, R. B. Wright in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 2 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985) retains the text of the manuscripts.
- 30 On this see "The Expectation," p. 10 and n. 27.
- 31 "The Expectation," 11.
- 32 "The Expectation," 10.
- 33 On the difficulties in this verse, see "The Expectation," pp. 10, 14-15 and n. 25.
- 34 For details see "The Expectation", 8-13 and also the notes on my translation of Ps.Sol. 17 in *Outside the Old Testament*. J. Schüpphaus has tried to distinguish two redactions of this psalm, the first speaking about a Davidic king saving Israel in distress, the second presenting the picture of a holy, wise and fully obedient servant of God governing a holy people, see *Die Psalmen Salomos* (AGJU 7; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), especially pp. 64-73. Whereas it is quite likely that the Psalms of Solomon received their present form during a period of intensive use, I consider it unlikely that we shall ever be able to retrace their literary history in detail.
- 35 On this see *Jesus, The Servant-Messiah*, 68-72 which is based on my "The Earliest Christian Use of Christos. Some Suggestions," *NTS* 32 (1986), 267-281, now in *Collected Essays*, 102-124.
- 36 There is a variant reading *tachunēi* that may be explained as a future:

- "God will hasten." There is no contradiction with "at the time you have (fore)seen" in v. 21, just as there is no contradiction between Mark 13:30 and 13:32.
- 37 During the preparation of this section I benefited much from discussions with Johannes Tromp who is preparing a doctoral thesis on the Assumption of Moses (to be defended in 1992). He allowed me to consult his edition of the text and a preliminary translation. See also his article "Taxo, the Messenger of the Lord," *JSJ* 21 (1990), 200-209.
- 38 I do not think we can distinguish two redactions, one to be dated in the time of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, one in the post-Herodian period (on this theory and its defendants see O. Camponovo, *Königtum*, 142-175). The chapters 8-10, while abounding with references to the Maccabean period as portrayed in 1 and 2 Maccabees, describe the time of the End.
- 39 On this aspect see D. C. Carlson, "Vengeance and Angelic Mediation in *Testament of Moses 9 and 10*", *JBL* 101 (1982), 85-95 (esp. pp. 91-95).
- 40 Following J. Licht, "Taxo or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance," *JJS* 12 (1961), 95-103.
- 41 Cf. Dan. 11:29-35; 12:1-3; 1 Enoch 102-104; Syr. Apoc. Baruch 48:48-50; 52:7-16; Wis. 2:12-20 and 5:1-7, and Luke 6:22-23 par. Matt. 5:11-12; Mark 8:34-9:1 and par.; 13:13.
- 42 "A sede regni sui" cf. "parebit regnum illius" in v. 1.
- 43 LXX "of his sons", a reading that, according to the apparatus in BHS, is also found in (a) Qumran manuscript(s).
- 44 Cf. Exod. 28:41; 29:9; Lev. 8:33 etc. See on this point particularly D. C. Carlson, "Vengeance", pp. 93-94.
- 45 The "illos" in v. 2 remains vague. It stands parallel to "filios suos" in v. 3. It may refer back to Taxo and his sons in chapter 9, but then clearly as representatives of the true Israel. Note that the exaltation of the messenger is followed by that of Israel in vv. 8-10.
- 46 In the article mentioned in note 37 above.
- 47 E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1985), part II "The Kingdom" (pp. 123-241), especially 123-156 and 222-241.
- 48 See especially pp. 133-141; the quotation is from p. 138. Sanders returns to Theudas and the Egyptian prophet on various places (see his Index of Names), but nowhere (not even in his concluding remarks on pp.

228-240) does he put the matter so directly as in the passage just quoted.

- 49 Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs. Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis-Chicago-New York: Winston Press, 1985; second edition New York: Harper and Row, 1988).
- 50 M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit vor Herodes I bis 70 n. Chr.* (AGJU 1; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961; second edition 1976). On the parallels and differences between Jesus and apocalyptic prophets and Zealot popular leaders see also Hengel's *Nachfolge und Charisma. Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Mt. 8:21f. und Jesu Ruf in die Nachfolge* (BZNW 34; Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1968).
- 51 See *Christology in Context*, 160-165 and my earlier article "Josephus und die Zukunftserwartungen seines Volkes" in O. Betz, K. Haacker, M Hengel (eds.), *Josephus-Studien* (FS O. Michel; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1974), 205-219, now in *Collected Essays*, 48-62 (see esp. 59-62).
- 52 The report on Judas the Galilean in *J. W.* 2.118 and *Ant.* 18.4-9, 23-25 is also interesting. Judas (according to *Ant.* he was aided by the Pharisee Saddok) is called a teacher (*sophistês*). At the time of the census by Quirinius he reproached his fellow-countrymen for paying their taxes to the Romans and thereby tolerating human masters after serving God alone (*J. W.* 2.118, cf. 2.433). Typical of the Fourth Philosophy and its leader Judas was an "uncompromising passion for freedom, since they take God as their only leader and master" (*Ant.* 18:23). In their view the Jewish people lived directly under the rule of God, and they believed that if only they resisted the Romans, "God would eagerly join in promoting the success of their plans, especially if they did not shrink from the slaughter that might come on them" (*Ant.* 18.5), God would establish his kingdom on earth, if only they stood firm, whether they would be successful or would die as martyrs. On Judas see Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs*, 190-199 (whose translations I have followed). These authors view the Fourth Philosophy as a group of radical believers ready to suffer violence and death. Compare M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, 79-148, who tends to emphasize the element of armed rebellion.
- 53 So Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs*, 161.
- 54 See *Ant.* 20:188 on the prophet under Festus, "a certain impostor who had promised them salvation and rest from troubles, if they chose to follow him into the desert."
- 55 P. W. Barnett, "The Jewish Sign Prophets - A. D. 40-70. Their Intentions and Origin," *NTS* 27 (1980-81), 679-696 (quotation from p. 688).

- 56 *Königtum*, 259-307.
- 57 Camponovo, *Königtum*, 267-280.
- 58 The translations of 1QM are taken from G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, third edition 1987).
- 59 Probably God himself is meant.
- 60 See still M. de Jonge - A. S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament," *NTS* 12 (1965-66), 301-326, as well as later studies by J. Fitzmyer (1967), J. Carmignac (1970) and J. T. Milik (1972). For details see O. Camponovo, *Königtum*, 284-291; now also E. Puech, "Notes sur le manuscrit de XI Melchisédeq," *RevQ* 12 (1985-1987), 483-513.
- 61 See *Christology in Context*, 55, 57, 87, 156-158.
- 62 This interpretation rests on that of lines 9-11. Camponovo objects that it is unlikely that a designation of God would be used for another figure; he underestimates the strength of the evidence, however.
- 63 Transl. G. J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran. 4QFlorilegium in Its Jewish Context* (JSOTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985).
- 64 For this exegesis see G. J. Brooke's commentary and also M. A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987), 262. Brooke reminds us of 1 Chron. 17:14, "I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom for ever" (p. 178).
- 65 See note 1; Beasley-Murray's remarks are found on pp. 49-51.
- 66 H. W. Kuhn, *Enderwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil. Untersuchungen zu den Gemeindeliedern von Qumran* (SUNT 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), with an appendix on "Eschatologie und Gegenwart in der Verkündigung Jesu."
- 67 So also H. Merklein, *Die Gottesherrschaft als Handlungsprinzip*, 159 and *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft*, 64.