KINGDOM OF GOD, SON OF MAN AND JESUS' SELF-UNDERSTANDING

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Dedicated to my Friends at the Research Seminar at Lund

I. Introduction

The three topics of our title are perhaps the most debated problems of Gospel research. It will, of course, not be possible to deal with them completely in a single paper. Instead this article will re-examine some aspects of the 'Kingdom of God', especially in the light of certain evidence about the 'Son of Man', and the relation of the Kingdom to Jesus' person and mission.

My basic text will be two logia in the Beelzebul controversy as presented in Matthew 12:25–32. This text has parallels in Mark 3:23–30 and Luke 11:17–30 and 12:10, though the actual logia (Mt 12:28 and 32) are found only in the Lucan version (11:20 and 12:10).

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2 I happily put it on record that while in preparation some of the issues of this paper were discussed in Prof. Birger Gerhardsson's research seminar at Lund. The present article builds on my previous work, The Son of Man: Vision and Interpretation (WUNT 38, Tübingen 1986), in which I have also broached the questions of the Kingdom of God and Jesus' self-understanding. I am well aware that my proposal to treat the Kingdom of God and the Son of Man is considered problematic by some scholars (e.g. E. Käsemann, 'Sätze Heiligen Rechts in Neuem Testament', NTS 1 [1954–5] 248ff.; H. Conzelmann, 'Gegenwart und Zukunft in der synoptischen Tradition', ZTK 54 [1957] 277–96; P. Vielhauser, Aufsätze zum Neuem Testament [München 1965] 55–91. For criticism of these, see C. Colpe, 'Der Begriff "Menschensohn" und die Methode der Erforschung messianischer Prototypen', Kairos 14 [1972] 241–57), while a few others would even reject the very concept of Son of Man outright. In my previous work I sought to demonstrate the existence of a Son of Man concept prior to Jesus, and more generally the connection of the Son of Man with the Kingdom of God.
4 The traditio-historical, form-critical and redactio-historical problems of this text are well-known, and no attempt will be made to delineate them in detail.
II. The Question of Priority

With respect to the pericope of the Beelzebul controversy as a whole Matthew and Mark have generally been considered as being dependent upon Q, though Matthew is thought to have conflated the Marcan account with the Q material in, for example, 12:29 and 31. With regards to priority, the question is a double one: a) priority between Mark and Q and b) priority between Matthew and Luke. With respect to the first, though Mark has been favored more often than Q, it is not possible to speak of a consensus. Q has been advocated by, among others, A. Fridrichsen, H. E. Tödt, S. Schulz, E. Percy, A. J. B. Higgins, B. Lindars, and E. Bammel, while Mark has been supported by inter alios J. Wellhausen, G. Bornkamm, C. K. Barrett, H. J. Wrege.


8 Der Menschensohn 109–12.

9 Q—Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten (Zürich 1972) 206.

10 Die Botschaft Jesu (Lund 1953) 253ff.

11 Jesus and the Son of Man (London 1964) 127ff.

12 Jesus Son of Man (London 1983) 35.


14 Das Evangelium Matthaei (Berlin 1904) 62ff.


17 Die überlieferungsgeschichte der Bergpredigt (Tübingen 1968) 164ff.
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C. Colpe, and R. A. Edwards. In spite of his being often quoted as supporting Marcan priority R. Bultmann seems to be ambivalent. Lövestam inclines hesitatingly towards Marcan priority, while Fitzmyer is undecided.

Using a different line of argumentation R. Schippers has suggested with respect to Matthew 12:32 and parallels that both Mark and Q go back to an Aramaic Vorlage, and that the real question is which of them has preserved the original more faithfully. In a similar way, Marshall thinks that the two versions may have their explanation in 'an ambiguous Aramaic original'. In his more recent book, Higgins follows Schipper's lead, explaining the discrepancy between Mark and Q by postulating 'one primitive Aramaic logion in the pre-Marcan and pre-Q tradition' which 'bifurcated to form the Marcan and Q sayings'.

From the above it becomes obvious that here at least we

18 'Ὁ Νικό τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in TDNT VIII 442f.
20 Cf. History 13: 'The form of the story which Matthew and Luke found in Q could well be more original than that of Mark', while on p. 131, he says: 'Mark has the relatively most original form'; cf. also 405f.
21 Spiritus Blasphemia 71.
23 'The Son of Man in Matt xii, 32 = Lk xii, 10, Compared with Mk iii, 28', Studia Evangelica IV, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin 1968) 231ff.
24 Schippers contemplates two interpretations, one: 'all that which men blaspheme will be forgiven', and, two: 'whoever shall blaspheme the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him'. Schippers thinks that Q by its singular semititular rendering of barnasha gives the correct sense, but considers the distinction between the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit unthinkable before Easter. It was the result of 'a periodizing of the history of salvation'. On the other hand, the Marcan version reflects a time when barnasha could not be understood as a title, because this title was understood of the eschatological Judge. In the Aramaic Vorlage barnasha must have referred to Jesus as a man with a divine mission. The forgivable sin was in reference to Jesus as a man, while the unforgivable sin was directed against 'the eschatological act of God' as manifested through Jesus' works (ibid., 234–5).
26 The Son of Man 88ff.
27 But against Schippers, Higgins holds that 'the Q form has departed from the meaning of the underlying Aramaic logion which is more faithfully preserved in Mark 3:28f. . . . the Q version is the result of a deliberate christologization of the primitive logion', ibid. 89.
cannot assume Marcan priority. In fact the case for Marcan priority is more tenuous than it appears, while that of Q is stronger than has been recognized. First, Mark's βασιλεύει is, by comparison with Luke's ἐρεί and Matthew's εἰμί, the more technical term and may indicate a later development. Secondly, M. Black has pointed out that the Matthean form εἴπῃ λόγον κατά and the Lucan form ἐρεί λόγον ἐλς have parallels in Daniel 7:25, and that in a context of blasphemy, as here. In view of the influence of Daniel 7 on Jesus' understanding of the Son of Man (hereinafter SM), this strengthens the case for the originality of the Q form. Thirdly, J. Wellhausen's view, followed by others, that the Q form is a misunderstanding of the Aramaic was perhaps too hasty. The problem is not simply that in Q barnasha assumed titular force referring to Jesus, whereas earlier it had referred to men in general, but that whereas in the Marcan form the 'sons of men' is the subject of the blaspheming, in the Q form 'Son of Man' is the object of the blasphemy. The problem is thus bigger than one of mere misunderstanding of a single term. Higgins recognized this and explained the Q form as 'a deliberate christologization'. This view is more probable than the misunderstanding view, but it is unnecessary. It is more straightforward to take Mark's τοῖς νοκτὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων as a

28 The preference for Marcan priority is to a certain extent influenced, no doubt unconsciously, by the general underlying assumption of Marcan priority. The strongest argument is that Mark is free from the apparent problem which Q entails by its distinction between blasphemy against the Son of Man and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
29 So Tödt, Der Menschensohn, 286f. and Lövestam, Spiritus Blasphemia 71.
31 See my The Son of Man ch. IV.
32 Matthaei 63; Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien (Berlin 2nd edn. 1911) 67.
34 The Son of Man 89.
semitic expression equivalent to Matthew's ordinary Greek τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.\textsuperscript{35} Fourthly, the wording of Matthew 12:32 = Luke 12:10 is rather offensive, which makes it unlikely to be the work of Jesus' followers, especially after Easter, when the Christian community was disposed to ascribe to her Master a position of the highest honour as well as honorific titles. Fifthly, the embarrassment, felt even today, in accounting for the sharp differentiation between the SM and the Holy Spirit speaks for the originality of the Q version. Sixthly, Lövestam has shown that the Marcan wording πάντα τὰ ἀμαρτήματα καὶ αἱ βλασφημίαι (similarly Matthew) includes not only blasphemies against the SM, but even against God himself,\textsuperscript{36} which indicates that the objection raised against Q on account of the differentiation between the SM and the Holy Spirit is a pseudo-problem. At the same time this highlights the fact that the terms for blasphemy here actually do mean blasphemy, and this makes improbable the understanding of the saying as originally having in view merely slanderous speech against men.\textsuperscript{37} The purpose is to show the unlimited character of forgiveness, except when the Holy Spirit comes into question.\textsuperscript{38} Seventhly, in the final analysis the real question is whether there is anything in these words which rules out their having been uttered by Jesus.

\textsuperscript{35} The expression 'sons of...', though occurring some five times in Matthew (8:12; 9:15; 18:38 [bis]; 23:15) and Luke (5:34; 10:6; 16:8 [bis]; 20:34) is never construed with 'men'. Even at 9:8 Matthew has ἀνθρώπως, as here. Mark is unique in having the OT expression σοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

\textsuperscript{36} Spiritus Blasphemia 44ff. He refers to The Gospel of Thomas Logion 45, See R. M. Grant, D. N. Freeman, The Secret Sayings of Jesus 148.

\textsuperscript{37} Βλασφημία (as well as βλασφημεῖ) is used in all periods of the Greek language both of slander etc. against other human beings and of blasphemy against the higher power(s). See LSJ s.v.; Δ. Δημητράκος, Μέγα Λεξικόν οτίς 'Ελληνικής Γλώσσης s.v. and Moulton-Milligan s.v. Similarly the LXX. Beyer, TDNT I 622 writes, 'In the NT the concept of blasphemy is controlled throughout by the thought of violation of the power and majesty of God.' In the Gospels Mt 15:19 = Mk 7:22 is uncertain. The rest of the occurrences are in reference to God (Mt 12:31f. par.; 26:65 par.; Lk 5:21; Jn 10:33). In the rest of the NT the term is used, as elsewhere, of both men and God. See further H. W. Beyer, Βλασφημεῖ etc., TDNT I 621–5; and O. Hofius, Βλασφημία etc., Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament [EWNT] I 527–32.

\textsuperscript{38} This point implies no contradiction to point four, above, since the Marcan wording, in spite of its including every blasphemy, takes the edge away by not speaking explicitly of God or the SM.
The first saying (Mt 12:28 = Lk 11:20) has found virtually unanimous acceptance. However the second saying (Mt 12:32 = Lk 12:10) is frequently treated as a secondary creation chiefly because of the differentiation which it makes between the SM and the Holy Spirit (though it is often recognized that the substance of this saying too, whether in its Marcan or Q form, probably goes back to Jesus). In as much as both sayings evince the urgency and radicalness so characteristic of Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God and its demands upon his followers, some connection with him would seem to be inescapable.

With respect to the other question of priority, namely the one between Matthew and Luke, preference has normally been accorded to Luke. The main reasons for this are: 1) Luke’s εν δακτυλῳ Θεοῦ must be the more original form because it is a conscious allusion to Exodus 8:19 (LXX), according to which Pharaoh’s magicians, unable to perform Moses’ third miracle, exclaimed: Δάκτυλος Θεοῦ ἐστιν τοῦτο. 2) It is claimed that if εν πνεύματι Θεοῦ had been original, there is no obvious reason why Luke, for whom πνεύμα is a favourite term, should have replaced πνεύμα with δακτυλός. 3) On the other hand, 

39 Cf. Bultmann’s remark that it can ‘claim the highest degree of authenticity which we can make for any saying of Jesus: it is full of that feeling of eschatological power which must have characterized the activity of Jesus’ History, 162. See further Dodd, Parables 36; Fuller, Mission 37f.; E. Käsemann, Exegetische Versuche I. 208; Perrin, The Kingdom of God e.g. 76; W. Michaelis, Das Evangelium nach Matthäus II (1949) 154; R. Morgenthaler, Kommende Reich (Zürich 1952) 60; R. Schnackenburg, Gottes Herrschaft und Reich (Freiburg 1959) 109; Kümmel, Verheißung 99ff.; G. E. Ladd, Jesus and the Kingdom (London 1966) 135ff; M. Hengel, The Charismatic Leader and His Followers (ET; Edinburgh 1981) 65.
42 Cf. E. E. Ellis, Luke 167: ‘Luke doubtless is giving the more original wording... In all likelihood it is Jesus’ own phrase by which he defines his mission in terms of the Exodus... as he does elsewhere’.
43 MT Exodus 8:15 καὶ σωθήσεται.
Matthew is quite likely to have changed δάκτυλος το πνεύμα in view of the saying on the blasphemy against the Spirit in v. 32. All this is plausible and may even be correct, but it is not incontrovertible.

Although the referring of εν δάκτυλῳ Θεοῦ to Exodus 8:19 (LXX) is certainly striking, Fuller appears to read too much in the parallelism when he compares the Exodus events with the circumstances of Jesus in his proclamation of the Kingdom of God and his own Exodus. Apart from the phrase δάκτυλος Θεοῦ there is nothing further in common between the Exodus text and our own. For though the phrase in Exodus is used of God’s working behind Moses, and thus may justifiably be seen as a parallel to Jesus’ working, it should be pointed out that the context in Exodus bears no further similarities to our text, which is dominated by the idea of the Kingdom of God. Nor does the Exodus text have anything to do with casting out of evil spirits.

The expression δάκτυλος Θεοῦ is infrequent in the OT, occurring twice of the tables of stone written by the finger of God and once of the heavens which are the work of his fingers. Neither of these occurrences comes closer to our text than Exodus 8:19. However, there is another text, which has usually been overlooked. Although on the surface it bears no resemblance to our text, at a deeper level it actually sustains some interesting associations of context and content. In Daniel 5:1 (LXX) and 5 (LXX, Θ) while Belshazzar drank out of the vessels taken as spoils from the Jerusalem temple, it is said that ἐξῆλθον δάκτυλοι (ὡσεὶ LXX) χεῖρος ἀνθρώπου and wrote on the wall what was taken to be a message from God. Although the fingers were likened to human ones, they were rightly understood as coming from God—(Θ) 5:24, and note

45 Mission 37f.: ‘The plagues of Egypt wrought by the finger of God, were preliminary demonstrations of power pointing forward to the decisive act of God, the Exodus itself, which at Exodus 15:6 is attributed to the right hand of God. The plagues of Egypt, that is to say, were not themselves the great event, but signs wrought by God as pointers to the accomplishment of the great event in the near future.... The exorcisms of Jesus are the preliminary assault on the kingdom of Satan...’

46 Exodus 31:18 γεγραμμένας τῷ δακτύλῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ, and Deuteronomy 9:10 γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ δακτύλῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

47 Psalm 8:4 ἔγρα τῶν δακτύλων σου.

48 One of those who have noticed it is Marshall, Luke 475.
Belshazzar’s consternation—who thus was sealing one epoch of human history, putting an end to the first of a series of four evil kingdoms in order to prepare the way finally for the establishment of the fifth kingdom, his Kingdom. God was understood as being in action. The context of the downfall of the kingdoms of evil, giving way to the Kingdom of God, is thus even more appropriate to the theme of the Beelzebul controversy than the Exodus event. This becomes even more striking when we recall the role of the SM both in Daniel and the Gospels in connection with the Kingdom of God, and the evil powers. Nevertheless, the difference between Matthew’s πνεύμα and Luke’s δάκτυλος is not really as great as it may appear. Had the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Luke 12:10 stood in the Beelzebul controversy—as it does in Matthew—it would have been understood simply and naturally in reference to the works which Jesus performed by the finger of God. It is thus obvious that the finger of God is nothing else than an anthropomorphic symbol for the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it is perhaps an overstatement to claim that πνεύμα is a favorite word of Luke in contrast to Matthew. The term occurs thirty-seven times in Luke over against Matthew’s nineteen instances. Nor is it a valid argument to claim that if a word occurs frequently in an author, he may be presumed to have preserved every instance of it in the tradition.

It should be borne in mind that in the question of priority between Matthew and Luke we need to distinguish between priority of wording and priority of context. Even if Matthew can be proved to have changed Luke’s δάκτυλος to πνεύμα, this does not automatically imply that he also changed the context of the second saying. It is true that

49 See Caragounis, The Son of Man ch. IV.
50 To the same effect J. D. G. Dunn, Christology in the Making 138. Lövestam, Spiritus Blasphemia 42f., shows that the expressions ‘spirit of God’ and ‘finger of God’ correspond to the OT expressions ‘Yahweh’s finger, hand, arm’ used of God’s saving activity.

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Matthew has a tendency to group his material; thus, hypothetically, he could have brought the blasphemy against the Spirit within the context of the Beelzebul controversy. But are there any cogent reasons why this has to be so? The context of Luke 12:8–12 can under no circumstances be the original collocation of these sayings.\(^52\) Luke 12:10 is clearly a *Fremdkörper* in the present context.\(^53\) The Matthean text, on the other hand, evinces the smoothness that would have been expected if the passage had been conceived of as a unity, lacking the rough seams of redactional activity, evidenced at other places in the synoptic tradition, except perhaps for verse 30, which seems to be foreign to this context. Had Jesus ever uttered the saying on blasphemy, it is difficult to find another context in the Gospels where it could fit better than the context of the Beelzebul controversy.\(^54\) That Matthew could be the originator of this collocation is, of course, fully possible. However, if we accept both sayings as basically original, what conclusive evidence is there for separating them in the teaching of Jesus, especially in view of the independent corroboration of Mark? As for the pseudo-difficulty of the forgivable sin against the SM versus the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit—the real reason for separating the two logia—the Beelzebul controversy supplies the interpretation. The difficulty would appear to be not so much intrinsic, as dogmatic-theological. The contrast is not between an inferior being (the SM), against whom blasphemy is forgivable, and a superior being (the Holy Spirit), against blasphemy is unforgivable, but between the person of the SM in his present hiddeness and elusiveness, which makes misunderstanding understandable and forgivable and the activity of the Holy Spirit through the SM, the rejection of which implies willful resistance against the salvific act of God, and does not leave any room for leniency. As the author of Hebrews might have

\(^{52}\) Cf. also Tödt, *Der Menschensohn* 110.


\(^{54}\) Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man* 178, admits that ‘The “blasphemy” saying fits very well into this context’ (i.e. the Beelzebul controversy).
expressed it, for such willful rejection 'there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin'.

I conclude, therefore, that it is highly probable that Matthew’s collocation and wording of these two sayings was firmly rooted in the tradition about Jesus’s teaching on the Kingdom of God.

III. Is There A Difference Between "Ḥgyikev" and "ɛḇḥšāsev"?

In the Synoptics there are eight sayings that speak of the nearness or arrival of the Kingdom of God. Matthew has four of them, Mark one and Luke three. According to Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist commenced his ministry with the words μετανοεῖτε Ḫgyikev γάρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. This saying has no parallel in Mark or Luke. According to Matthew 4:17 Jesus commenced his public ministry with the call to repentance: μετανοεῖτε Ḫgyikev γάρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. This saying has a parallel in Mark 1:15: πεπλήρωται ο καιρὸς καὶ Ḫγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. Luke records a parallel circumstance (4:43ff.; 8:1), but without a corresponding Kingdom saying. Matthew’s third occurrence records Jesus’ injunction to the Twelve, κηρύσσετε λέγοντες ὅτι Ḫγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (10:7). The Mission of the Twelve is mentioned in Mark 6:7ff. but without the Kingdom saying. Luke, too, records the Mission of the Twelve, and the fact that they were to proclaim the Kingdom (9:2), but mentions Ḫγγικεν only in connection with the Mission of the Seventy: λέγετε αὐτοῖς Ḫγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (10:9). They were to repeat in protestation if repulsed (Lk 10:11). Finally, in the Beelzebul controversy Jesus is represented as saying: εἶ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι Θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἀρα ἐφθάσας ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (12:28). This saying is paralleled in Luke 11:20, with the only difference that in place of Matthew’s πνεύματι Luke has δακτύλῳ.

We thus have two types of statement: Ḫγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ and ἐφθάσας ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Is there any difference between these two? It would appear that

55 Hebrews 10:27; cf. also 2:3.
for the most part the question has been answered negatively. The advocates of Realized Eschatology have interpreted τῆγγικένεν as ἐφθασεν, while the proponents of Futuristic Eschatology have taken ἐφθασεν as if it were τῆγγικένεν. Moreover, it would appear that the philological issue has not been stated accurately. This, together with contextual and other considerations, would seem to demand that we differentiate between the two types of statement and that we look for a fresh solution.

i. Linguistic Reflections

In his influential little book, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, Dodd sought to justify his understanding of τῆγγικένεν as ἐφθασεν chiefly on the grounds that ‘in the LXX ἐγγὺςεἰν is sometimes used (chiefly in past tenses) to translate the Hebrew verb naga’ and the Aramaic verb m’ta’. Since both of these verbs are also translated by the verb φθάνειν, Dodd surmised that ἐγγὺςεἰν and φθάνειν were identical in meaning. He found corroboration for this standpoint in the answer which the Modern Greek waiter gives on being called, σταλάσσα, τηλεπι, which Dodd took to mean ‘Here I am, sir!’ J. Y. Campbell was not slow to react, pointing out Dodd’s error with regards to the LXX, which Dodd corrected in the third edition of his book.

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57 Cf. Dodd, ExpT 48 (1936–7) 188, ‘Mr. Campbell takes τῆγγικένεν at its face value and tries to make ἐφθασεν conform.’ See further R. Morgenthaler, *Kommendes Reich* 60; W. Michaelis, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* II, 154.

58 Parables, 36.

59 ExpT 48 (1936–7) 91ff.

60 The evidence of the LXX is as follows: there are 161 occurrences of ἐγγὺςεἰν. Of these twenty-four in the Apocrypha and seven more in the canonical books lack a Hebrew counterpart. The remainder 130 instances translate no less than thirteen different Hebrew words: רָדְרִי בְּעָשָׁה (1x); לִמְכְּה (1x); רָגִי (1x); רָו (1x); כָּז (1x); וּלְכָנָה (1x); שָׁנְא (1x); נַפְּלָה (1x); מִמְרָב (2x); מַּמְרָב (6x); מַה (40x), and בָּרִי (72x); more analytically: בָּרִי (29x); בָּרִי (28x), the rest being distributed among seven other words of this root). The figures show that the LXX used ἐγγὺςεἰν 112 times to translate words which strictly indicate ‘nearness’, and eighteen times more loosely. שָׁנְא which is met only twice, and מַה six times, do not at all have the perfect τῆγγικένεν (as Dodd had stated in the first edition of his Parables), which occurs only seven times, always translating the root בָּרִי.
Campbell also pointed out that 'Surely when a Greek waiter says, ἐφθασα, κύριε!, he does not mean, “Here I am, sir” (Dodd, 43, n.1), but, “Just coming, sir!”'. However, despite Dodd’s corrections, the current text of his book is basically the same. With respect to the Modern Greek example, the wording now is: ‘If you call a waiter, I am told, he will say, as he bustles up, Ἐφθασα, κύριε!’ Thus, ἐφθασεν η [sic] βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ expresses in the most vivid and forcible way the fact that the Kingdom of God has actually arrived’. Thus, his conclusion is: ‘It would appear therefore that no difference of meaning is intended between ἐφθασεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ή βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ and ἡγγικεν ή βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ.’ Dodd’s interpretation of ἡγγικεν and ἐφθασεν appears to have been widely accepted.

It is impossible for me within the limits of this study to attempt any detailed treatment of the uses of εὐγγέλιον and φθάνων in Greek literature and the NT, or of the Semitic verbs which they translate in the LXX and Θ. However, as a background to my discussion I will take up briefly Dodd’s position.

When Dodd says ‘In the LXX εὐγγέλιον is sometimes used (chiefly in past tenses) to translate the Hebrew verb naga’ and the Aramaic verb m’la’ and states that ‘both... mean “to reach”, “to arrive”,’ what he means is that εὐγγέλιον, which occurs 161 times in the OT, translates six of the 149 instances of naga’ and two of the eight instances of m’la (all in Daniel). But as M. Black pointed out ‘Where it [sc. εὐγγέλιον] does render these verbs, it is always in the sense “to arrive at”, “to draw near to”, never absolutely “to arrive”, “to come”.’

Cf. C. T. Craig, ‘Realized Eschatology’, JBL 56 (1937) 20: ‘Whenever the perfect of εὐγγέλιον has a temporal reference it must be translated with a future significance “to be near”.’ Φθάνων occurs twenty-seven times of which six instances are in the Apocrypha, for which there is no Hebrew equivalent. The remaining twenty-one cases translate: γραφα (1x); πρεσβ (1x); κύριο (1x); ἱερό (τεσσαρακτυς) (8x, all in Daniel), and ματα (10x).

61 Cf. ExpT 48 (1936-7) 140.
62 ExpT 48 (1936-7) 93.
63 Parables 36 n.15.
64 Parables 36f.
65 Parables 36.
66 The Kingdom of God has Come’, ExpT 63 (1951-2) 289; Aramaic Approach, 208f.
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The verb ἐγγίζειν, by nature a linear verb, is formed from the adjective ἐγγύς (‘near’) and denotes primarily ‘nearness’. In later Greek, especially Modern Greek, ἐγγίζειν frequently bears also the sense of ‘to touch’, and thus becomes a synonym for classical ἀπτεῖν, διαγάνειν and παύειν. The two main sense are illustrated by the LXX, which uses it seventy-two times for ἔρχομαι and forty times for ἀναστέπω, both of which mean “to come near”, and six times for ἔρχομαι (‘to touch’). The meaning of ‘nearness’ may be spatial or temporal. In the NT ἐγγίζειν occurs twenty-five times in a spatial sense and seventeen times in a temporal sense. In all of these instances the meaning is ‘to draw near’.

The verb φθάνειν is by nature a punctiliar verb, denoting the point of reaching, of arriving somewhere. Like ἐγγίζειν, it has both a spatial and a temporal significance. In classical literature its most usual meaning was comparative: ‘to anticipate’, ‘to arrive before’ (someone else), ‘to come first’, ‘to overtake’. There is a gradual but noticeable tendency for the comparative element to be pushed to the background, and the term then comes to mean simply ‘to arrive’. This tendency is not first evidenced in Hellenistic literature, as many of the works quoted in this study imply, but already in classical times. The NT provides only one example of the earlier meaning, 1 Thessalonians 4:15. In all other cases the meaning is ‘to come’, ‘to arrive’.

67 For a discussion of ἐγγύς in the NT, see Kümmel, Promise and Fulfillment 19–25.
68 It is perhaps of interest that Δ. Δημητράκος, Μέγα Λεξικόν τῆς Ελληνικῆς Γλώσσης III (1964) 2196 defines the first meaning of ἐγγύς as ‘φθάνω ἐγγύς’, etc.
71 W. R. Hutton, ‘The Kingdom of God has Come’, ExpT 64 (1952–3) 90ff. has tried, I think unsuccessfully, to prove the equation of ἐγγίζειν and φθάνειν.
72 See e.g. Xenophon, Cyropaedia V.4.9: ολ δὲ φθάσαντες εἰς πόλει τινα τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου μεγάλην.
ii. Modern Interpretations of Φθανείν

Fuller, with A. Richardson, T. W. Manson, and Barrett considers the Lucan form of the saying as the 'more primitive' and proceeds to state his view of eschatology. The finger of God is understood as an allusion to Exodus 8:19, the plagues of Egypt: 'By ascribing his exorcisms to the finger of God Jesus is placing them in the same relation to his own Exodus, which during his ministry still lies in the future, as the plagues of Egypt bore to the original Exodus, which contemporary Jewish thought regarded as a type of the eschatological redemption'. Thus Fuller, on the basis of this typology and the one in Isaiah 40ff. (the Cyrus prophecy), ascribes to ξφοασεν a future sense; Jesus 'is using the familiar prophetic device of speaking of a future event as though it were already present', and again 'The Kingdom of God has not yet come, but it is near, so near that it is operative in advance'. Perrin retorts that 'The exorcisms which occasioned the saying are not the product of a "vivid prophetic imagination" but an indubitable fact in the present, and that this is a strong argument for taking the verb in its literal sense'. He concludes that the cumulative weight of the evidence 'is such as to rule out Fuller's view of the Kingdom as only proleptically "operative in advance" in the ministry of Jesus'. He prefers for his part, to side with the middle-of-the-road scholars who consider the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus as both present and future. According to G. Lundström, The majority of German scholars accept the strongly futuristic aspect of the Kingdom of God and reject the idea that the Kingdom was regarded by Jesus

73 The Miracle Stories of the Gospels 1941, 39.
74 Teaching 82f.
75 The Holy Spirit 62f.
76 Mission 37.
77 It should be noted that this conclusion is not reached through linguistic considerations.
78 Mission 26.
79 Mission 25.
80 The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus 65.
81 Kingdom of God 87.
82 Kingdom of God 159.
as being present in His person'. J. Jeremias for example, considers God's rule as eschatological. He corrects Dodd's Realized Eschatology to 'eine sich realisierende Eschatologie' by leaving out of consideration statements such as Matthew 12:28 which apparently speak of the presence of the Kingdom. R. Morgenthaler, takes εφασεν as 'has come' and states that the Kingdom is around here but not actually present. It is present only in Jesus. W. Michaelis maintains that 'the Aramaic expression which lies at the basis [of the current expression] does not quite denote presence, but an intensification of imminence, a borderline case of approach, which, however, did not yet imply full arrival.' Accordingly, he takes εφασεν not as 'has come to you' but something like 'has come very close to you' and adds 'Under no circumstances can [Matthew] 12:28 be taken as the ground for speaking of the Kingdom of God as in any way present.' Lundström tends to agree with R. Schnackenburg's 'well-balanced account, which tries to do justice to the various aspects of Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom of God without one-sidedly stressing certain sayings at the cost of others.' ‘Εφάσεν, according to Schnackenburg, cannot mean anything else than 'has come'. There is an element of presence about the Kingdom, because the Kingdom is 'connected with His person and His works'. Nevertheless, he

83 The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus (Edinburgh, London 1963) 244.
84 Die Gleichnisse Jesu 1956.
85 Kommendes Reich (1952) 60.
86 Matthäus. II (1949) 154: 'der zugrundeliegende aramäische Ausdruck nicht schlechthin das Gekommensein bezeichnet haben wird, sondern eine Steigerung des Nahekommens, einen Grenzfall des Herankommens, der doch noch nicht volle Anwesenheit bedeutete'.
87 "Ist zu euch gekommen", sondern etwa "ist ganz dicht in eure Nähe gelangt!", ibid. 154.
89 Gottes Herrschaft und Reich.
90 The Kingdom of God 266. A case in point for Lundström would be Fuller, who 'quite correctly insists in his criticism on the futurist eschatology of Jesus, but he overlooks the fact that, at the same time, the Kingdom of God is active among mankind in the teaching and miracles of Jesus... Fuller underestimates the presence sayings' (252).
recognizes that Jesus' emphasis is on the futurity of the Kingdom. Sayings speaking of 'entering into the Kingdom of God' refer to the future Kingdom of God.

W. G. Kümmel\textsuperscript{92} takes $\varepsilon\phi\theta\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$ at its face value and agrees with Dodd's translation, though, he too holds both the futuristic and present elements about the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{93} He is described by G. R. Beasley-Murray\textsuperscript{94} as the scholar who came nearest to a 'genuine synthesis of realized and futurist eschatology in the teaching of our Lord'. Despite this G. E. Ladd complains that 'Kümmel's study leaves the reader with a difficult problem of understanding in just what sense the Kingdom of God is present in Jesus; and this arises in part out of Kümmel's failure to define precisely what the Kingdom of God is.'\textsuperscript{95} Ladd bases his study on G. Dalman's insight\textsuperscript{96} that $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha$ ($\nu\varphi\tau\pi\nu$) bears the abstract, dynamic sense of 'reign' or 'rule' rather than 'realm', and though he recognizes that 'not all uses of basileia can be adequately explained by this dynamic concept,'\textsuperscript{97} he notes that 'God's Kingdom in Jewish literature has almost always the abstract meaning of God's rule,'\textsuperscript{98} and applies this sense to the great bulk of his investigation.\textsuperscript{99} Without an extended examination Ladd takes

\textsuperscript{92} Verheißung 99ff. (Promise 107ff.).
\textsuperscript{93} E.g. Promise 35: 'Since Jesus, as has still to be shown, does not recognize any future development of the Kingdom of God, there remains only the interpretation that the Kingdom of God has already become effective in advance in Jesus and in the present events appearing in connection with his person'; 109: 'It is the meaning of the mission of Jesus, when announcing the approach of the Kingdom of God, to make this future at the same time already now a present reality'; and 136: 'The present possesses a definite eschatological character on account of the breaking in of the coming Kingdom through Jesus in the present'. Kümmel's disciple E. Grässer, Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung (Berlin 1977), 7 remarks that the present element in Kümmel is not the Kingdom but its imminence.
\textsuperscript{94} Jesus and the Future, 103 (cited by G. E. Ladd, Jesus and the Kingdom 123).
\textsuperscript{95} Jesus and the Kingdom 123ff.
\textsuperscript{96} The Words of Jesus (Edinburgh, 1902); see esp. 91–147.
\textsuperscript{97} Jesus and the Kingdom 191, where he quotes several texts which bear the sense of 'the Kingdom as an eschatological realm into which men enter'.
\textsuperscript{98} Jesus and the Kingdom 128ff.
\textsuperscript{99} See Jesus and the Kingdom 123 for a list of authorities who ascribe to $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha$ an abstract sense.
\(\text{εφθασεν}\) as ‘has come’,\(^{100}\) though he tempers the presence of the Kingdom with the futurity of its consummation. E. Jüngel says ‘Obviously the Kingdom of God projects in such a way into the present, that the power of God’s Kingdom is already, in fact just now at work.’\(^{101}\) This statement is, however, mitigated by his qualification that ‘On the other hand, we must understand “futurist” not in the sense of delay as distance, but in the sense of a future that stands in the present: the future of the Kingdom of God projects into the present as the finger of God.’\(^{102}\) In his most recent book G. R. Beasley-Murray thinks that Matthew 12:28 and parallels is so clear as to make its meaning ‘unambiguously plain’.\(^{103}\) He takes \(\text{εφθασεν}\) in the usual way as ‘has come’, basing his standpoint on the lexica, and chides the advocates of Futuristic Eschatology with seeking ‘to find ways of muting its testimony’\(^{104}\) and of unwillingness to ‘accept its plain meaning.’\(^{105}\)

I conclude this section with some quotations from Beasley-Murray about the present state of the question: ‘This understanding of the saying [i.e. the one he espouses] nevertheless has been rejected by certain scholars through the present century, and not a little ambivalence and confusion can be found in discussions concerning it. So crucial is the significance of the saying...’\(^{106}\) and again ‘Clearly the major issue in the saying is its implications for the coming of the Kingdom of God in relation to the ministry of Jesus.’\(^{107}\)

\(^{100}\) *Jesus and the Kingdom* 139: ‘We must translate ... “the kingdom of God has come upon you”. In some real sense of the word, the Kingdom is itself present. It is not merely the signs of the Kingdom or the powers of the Kingdom, but the Kingdom itself which is said to be present’.

\(^{101}\) *Paulus und Jesus* 185: ‘Offensichtlich ragt die nahe Zukunft der Gottesherrschaft als Finger Gottes so in die Gegenwart herein, daß die Macht der Gottesherrschaft schon, ja gerade jetzt wirksam ist.’


\(^{103}\) *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, Exeter 1986) 75.

\(^{104}\) *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* 76.

\(^{105}\) *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* 79.

\(^{106}\) *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* 75.

\(^{107}\) *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* 79.
Registering my agreement with Beasley-Murray’s last statement, and moreover noting the crucial role which ξφθασεν has played in discussions of the Kingdom of God, I now turn my attention to the meaning of ξφθασεν.

iii. The Aorist "Εφθασεν

We saw above that Dodd took the Greek waiter’s ‘ξφθασσα, κύριε!’ to mean ‘Here I am, sir!’ Following Campbell’s criticism that the expression must mean ‘Just coming, sir!’, Dodd, as we saw, withdrew his translation of the phrase, though he retained his originally proposed meaning tacitly: ‘If you call a waiter, I am told, he will say, as he bustles up, ‘ξφθασσα, κύριε!’ Thus, ξφθασεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ expresses in the most vivid and forcible way the fact that the Kingdom of God has actually arrived.’\(^{108}\) Dodd has this example from second or third hand, just like J. H. Moulton.\(^{109}\) Actually, what the Greek waiter means is ‘I’ll be there at once!’\(^{110}\) And in order that it may not be supposed that this usage is the prerogative of waiters, I will hasten to add that the idiom is quite frequent in Modern Greek and furthermore, that it is not the monopoly of φθάνειν.\(^{111}\) But ξφθασσα is a very usable verb in this idiom. Thus, for example, it occurs frequently when answering a call, or making an urgent appointment by telephone, or even by letter! The time element between the utterance of ξφθασσα! and the actual arrival is a relative

\(^{108}\) Parables 36 n.15.
\(^{110}\) Since the initial presentation of this paper, I have been asked to respond to the suggestion that Moulton seems to support the idea that ‘when the traveler called for the waiter, he was pleasantly surprised to find that the man was already there, or already coming with the coffee, and the phrase might mean that his wishes had been anticipated.’ My brief answer is that the waiter might have been on his way when he cried ξφθασεν, κύριε!, though not necessarily. He might even have to serve another table before coming to the traveller’s table! What is certain, however, is that when the waiter did come he would not have any coffee with him. He would come only to collect the order. It needs to be explained that in Greece coffee is prepared individually to the order of each customer, as there are many ways of preparing it. Hence the Greek waiter should not be made an accomplice of Realized Eschatology.

\(^{111}\) Cf. e.g. ἐκδύσες κακομολομη μου! (lit. ‘you are/will be burned...’) = It’ll be all over with you / That’ll be the end of you, my little wretch!
matter. It may be only seconds, if the persons conversing stand in close proximity, or hours, or even days. It all depends on the original positions and what has to be overcome before the persons so conversing (or corresponding) can find themselves next to each other. Why then use the aorist rather than the future? The aorist here emphasizes two points: the certainty and the immediacy of the action.112 "Εφθασα! means ‘you can consider me as being (virtually) there’; it is at least as vivid as Ἰ’l’ll be there in no time!’ The meaning is always future in that the time of the action denoted by the verb is always subsequent to that of the utterance.

Now were this idiom confined to Modern Greek, its relevance for the issue at hand might appear questionable. However, this is by no means so, and its great value is precisely that this idiom has always existed in Greek113—and therefore also in the Koine. A few examples will illustrate the point. In Euripides, Alcestis, 386, King Admetus, unable to bear the prospect of his beloved wife’s approaching death, cries: ἀπωλόμην ἄρ’, εἰ μὲ δὴ λέσσεις!, which has a perfect parallel in Modern Greek: (δ)χάθηκα ἐὰν μ.’ ἀφήσης! = ‘Ι’l’ll be lost if you leave me!’. Further down, in line 391, when he realizes that his wife is at the very point of death, he wails: ἀπωλόμην τάλας! = ‘I shall be lost, poor wretch!’114 The NT is not without its examples. In John 15:6, ἐὰν μὴ τις μείνῃ ἐν

112 Cf. Jannaris, An Historical Greek Grammar,§1855 ‘Sometimes it is used, particularly in colloquial speech, for the present or future, to denote a speedy or certain realization of an action’. He also relates this usage to that of the ἀναφορικός aorist.
113 Moulton, Prolegomena 135, thinks it may be one of the most ancient uses of the aorist, though his discussion of the timeless aorist is somewhat unclear.
114 It is instructive to note that the idiom obtains also in as sombre a text as Plato, Gorgias, 484 A: ἐὰν δὲ γε, οἶμαι, φῶςιν ἱκανὴ γένηται ἔχων ὁ ἀνήρ, πάντα ταῦτα ἀποσειςμένοις... έπανοστάς ἀνεφαίρετος ἡμέτερος ὁ δούλος, καὶ ἐντάθα ἐξέλαψε τῷ φύσεως δικαίῳ. See further Euripides, Medea, 77: ἀπολύσθη ἄρ’ εἰ κακόν προσολομοῦν νέον παλαιῷ, καὶ Aristophanes, Equites: ἤθην ἀπελάιας, ἐγέλασε ψολοκομίας, ἀπετυδρᾶσα μόθων, περιπέκκασα. A. N. Jannaris, An Historical Greek Grammar, (Hildesheim 1968) 437 §1855, says ‘So still in N’ (= Neohellenic, i.e. Modern Greek) and quotes another Modern Greek example: δυν' σε πιάσῃ ἡχαθήκες! = ‘If he catches you, you are done’ (lit. ‘you will be lost’, i.e. ‘it will be the end of you’).
the stress is probably more on the certainty than the immediacy of judgment. Here belongs also 1 Thessalonians 2:16: ἐφθάσαςεν δὲ ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς ἡ ὁργὴ ἐς τέλος, while certainty is primary in John 15:8: ἐν τούτῳ ἐδοξάσθη ὁ πατὴρ μου ἵνα καρπὸν πολὺν φέρητε καὶ γενήσετε ἐμοὶ μαθηταί. 117 Jannaris118 shows that occasionally the perfect instead of the aorist may be used, and quotes Romans 14:13: ἐὰν φάγη κατακέρται.

The same idiom is witnessed in the OT (LXX and Θ). Thus, in Ezekiel 7:3–5, the end, which brings God’s judgment, is said to have come: ἔκχεσεν τὸ πέρας ἐπὶ σὲ τὸν κατοικοῦντα τὴν γῆν, ἔκχεσεν δὲ καὶ θύμον, ἑγγυκέν ἢ ἡμέρα ... νῦν ἐγγύθεν ἐκχεσεν τὴν ὁργήν μου. The verb used is ἔκχα, which actually has the significance of the perfect, and ostensibly indicates that the end ‘has come’. This is, however, modified a little later by the equivalent expression ἑγγυκέν ἢ ἡμέρα, (ὑπὸ γῆρ), which indicates that only nearness is in view, while further down the idea is made explicitly future by the expression νῦν ἐγγύθεν ἐκχεσεν τὴν ὁργήν μου ἐπὶ σὲ (τῆς ξυνατομ σφυρών ἡμῶν). 119 In the Nebuchadnezzar story (Daniel 4) ἐφθάσαςεν occurs several times with futuristic sense: 4:24 (Θ): τούτῳ ἡ σύγκρισις αὐτοῦ, βασιλεῦ, καὶ σύγκρισις Ὑψίστου ἐστίν, δ’ ἐφθάσεν ἐπὶ τὸν κόρον μου τὸν βασιλέα, καὶ σὲ ἐκδιώξουσιν ..., where the futuristic sense of the aorist ἐφθάσεν is underscored by the future ἐκδιώξουσιν. 120 Ἐφθάσεν in v. 28 may be constative. However, παρῆβλεν ἀπὸ σοῦ in v. 31, as also the LXX perfect ἀφήρηται, are clearly futuristic. The same may be said of words interpreting the message on the wall (5:26ff.): ἐμὲ τρησεν...

115 N. Turner, Syntax in J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of NT Greek III (Edinburgh 1963) 73f. classifies this verse under both the gnomic and proleptic aorist.
116 Future sense is expressed also in Luke 12:49: τῷ ἱλασθείς βαλέτεν ἐπὶ τὴν γην, καὶ τῇ θέλω εἰ ἡδὲ ἀνήφη, a saying which is normally understood as a wish (see RSV, NEB, NIV, Modern Greek Version of 1985, Lutherbibel 1984, Elberfelder Bibel 1986, and Marshall, Luke 546. 117 This example comes close to being a gnomic aorist; nevertheless, the future reference is clear. Imminence is surely in view in John 12:23: ἐκθέσεθη καὶ γὰρ ἵνα δοξασθῇ οὗ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Other examples are 1 Corinthians 7:28: ἐὰν δὲ καὶ γαμήσῃς, οὐχ ἡμαρτεῖς and Galatians 5:4: καταργήθητε ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ οἰνίνες ἐν νόμῳ δικαίωσας, τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐξενέσατε.
118 An Historical Greek Grammar, 437 §1856.
119 See also Ez 7:7, 10, 12.
120 The LXX here has ἔπει in place of ἐφθάσεν!
Finally, in 7:27 the context makes it clear that the 'Kingdom' given to the saints is something future, although it is described by the aorist εἴδοθη. In all these cases the Aramaic uses the perfect, which indicates that the idiom was usable also in Aramaic, and that therefore, no a priori objection can be raised against a similar understanding of εφασεν in Matthew 12:28, on the basis of any hypothetically dissimilar use in the Aramaic behind the Greek text. The word may have been סָפַר, as Dodd, following Dalman, maintained. As we have seen, this word could be used idiomatically like εφασεν in Greek. Could this idiomatic use of εφασεν be the meaning in Matthew 12:28 = Luke 12:10? To answer this question it will be necessary to examine the context in which this logion occurs, the relation of Jesus' miracles (especially his expulsions of demons) to the Kingdom of God, and finally, the role of the Son of Man in the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Part 2 of this article (§§IV. The Context; V. Jesus' Expulsion of Demons and the Kingdom of God; and VI. The Son of Man and the Kingdom of God) will be concluded in vol. 41 (Nov 1989).

121 The LXX uses the active εἴδωκα.
122 MT 4:21 and 4:28 have the same reference to the superlatives in MT 5:26f and 7:27.
124 The Words of Jesus 107.