

KINGDOM OF GOD, SON OF MAN AND JESUS' SELF-UNDERSTANDING¹

Chrys C. Caragounis

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.²

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 12:10,³ though the actual logia (Mt 12:28 and 32) are found only in the Lucan version (11:20 and 12:10).⁴

¹The 1988 Tyndale New Testament Lecture.

²I 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 Neuen Testament', *NTS* 1 [1954–5] 248ff.; H. Conzelmann, 'Gegenwart und Zukunft in der synoptischen Tradition', *ZTK* 54 [1957] 277–96; P. Vielhauser, *Aufsätze zum Neuen 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.

³So A. Huck and H. Lietzmann, *Synopsis of the First Three Gospels*, ed. F. L. Cross (Oxford 1968) 67f. R. Holst's critique of the parallels in this and K. Aland, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (Stuttgart 1969), is inconsequential in this regard, 'Reexamining Mark 3:28f. and Its Parallels', *ZNW* 63 (1972) 122–4.

⁴The 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,⁵ though Matthew is thought to have conflated the Marcan account with the Q material in, for example, 12:29 and 31f.⁶ 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,⁷ H. E. Tödt,⁸ S. Schulz,⁹ E. Percy,¹⁰ A. J. B. Higgins,¹¹ B. Lindars,¹² and E. Bammel,¹³ while Mark has been supported by *inter alios* J. Wellhausen,¹⁴ G. Bornkamm,¹⁵ C. K. Barrett,¹⁶ H. J. Wrege,¹⁷

except for a brief justification for my procedure. Such a delineation can be found in A. J. B. Higgins, *The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge 1980) 85ff. See also I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Exeter 1978) 471–80, 516–9 and H. E. Tödt, *Der Menschensohn in der synoptischen Überlieferung* (Gütersloh 1963) 237ff., 282ff.

⁵ So e.g. R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (ET; Oxford) 13; F. W. Beare, *The Earliest Records of Jesus* (Oxford 1964) 102; Tödt, *Der Menschensohn* 50ff., 282ff.; W. G. Kümmel, *Verheißung und Erfüllung* (Zürich 1956) 18, 98; D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London 1972) 216; Marshall, *Luke* 516; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Luke* 917, 962; Higgins, *The Son of Man* 85ff.; J. Gnllka, *Matthäusevangelium* (HTKNT, Freiburg, etc. 1986) 454f.

⁶ Cf. Hill, *Matthew* 217; Marshall, *Luke* 471; Higgins, *The Son of Man* 86; Fitzmyer, *Luke* 917, 962; Gnllka, *Matthäusevangelium* 456; Beare, *The Earliest Records* 102.

⁷ 'Le péché contre le Saint-Esprit', *RHPhR* 3 (1923) 367–72.

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.

¹³ In review of E. Lövestam, *Spiritus Blasphemia*, in *JTS* n.s. 22 (1971) 192–4.

¹⁴ *Das Evangelium Matthaei* (Berlin 1904) 62f.

¹⁵ *Überlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium* (edd. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, H. J. Held) (WMANT 1, Neukirchen 1960) 31; *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (C. H. Dodd *Festschrift*) 243f.

¹⁶ *The Holy Spirit and The Gospel Tradition* (London 1957) 138.

¹⁷ *Die überlieferungsgeschichte der Bergpredigt* (Tübingen 1968) 164ff.

C. Colpe,¹⁸ and R. A. Edwards.¹⁹ In spite of his being often quoted as supporting Marcan priority R. Bultmann seems to be ambivalent.²⁰ Lövestam²¹ inclines hesitatingly towards Marcan priority, while Fitzmyer²² is undecided.

Using a different line of argumentation R. Schippers²³ 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.²⁴ In a similar way, Marshall²⁵ thinks that the two versions may have their explanation in 'an ambiguous Aramaic original'. In his more recent book, Higgins²⁶ follows Schipper's lead, explaining the discrepancy between Mark and Q by postulating 'one primitive Aramaic logion in the pre-Markan and pre-Q tradition' which 'bifurcated to form the Marcan and Q sayings'.²⁷

From the above it becomes obvious that here at least we

¹⁸ Ο Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in TDNT VIII 442f.

¹⁹ *The Sign of Jonah in the Theology of the Evangelists and Q* (SBT 2nd ser. 18, London 1971) 67f.

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.

²² *Luke* 962.

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 semi-titular 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).

²⁵ *Luke* 518ff.

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,²⁸ while that of Q is stronger than has been recognized. First, Mark's βλασφηημέω is, by comparison with Luke's ἐρεῖ and Matthew's εἴπη, the more technical term and may indicate a later development.²⁹ Secondly, M. Black³⁰ has pointed out that the Matthean form εἴπη λόγον κατὰ and the Lucan form ἐρεῖ λόγον εἰς 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),³¹ this strengthens the case for the originality of the Q form. Thirdly, J. Wellhausen's view,³² followed by others,³³ 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'.³⁴ This view is more probable than the misunderstanding view, but it is unnecessary. It is more straightforward to take Mark's τοῖς υἱοῖς 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.

³⁰ *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford 3rd edn. 1967) 195.

³¹ See my *The Son of Man* ch. IV.

³² *Matthaei 63; Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin 2nd edn. 1911) 67.

³³ H. Lietzmann, *Der Menschensohn: Ein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Freiburg 1896); A. Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache: Das Galiläische Aramäisch in seiner Bedeutung für die Erklärung der Reden Jesu und der Evangelien überhaupt* (Freiburg, Leipzig 1896); Bultmann, *History* 131; Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* 109f.; J. Jeremias, 'Die älteste Schicht der Menschensohn-Logien', *ZNW* 58 (1967) 165ff.; *New Testament Theology* I (ET; London 1971) 261; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, Exeter 1986) 219.

³⁴ *The Son of Man* 89.

semitic expression equivalent to Matthew's ordinary Greek τοὺς ἀνθρώπους.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 ἁμαρτήματα καὶ αἱ βλασφημίαι (similarly Matthew) includes not only blasphemies against the SM, but even against God himself,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.³⁷ The purpose is to show the unlimited character of forgiveness, except when the Holy Spirit comes into question.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.

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 ἀνθρώποις, as here. Mark is unique in having the OT expression υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

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.

³⁷ βλασφημία (as well as βλασφημέω) 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 Λεξικὸν οἰκῆς Ἑλληνικῆς 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, βλασφημέω etc., *TDNT* I 621-5; and O. Hofius, βλασφημία etc., *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* [EWNT] I 527-32.

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.³⁹ 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).⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ The main reasons for this are: 1) Luke's ἐν δακτύλῳ Θεοῦ must be the more original form because it is a conscious allusion to Exodus 8:19 (LXX),⁴² according to which Pharaoh's magicians, unable to perform Moses' third miracle, exclaimed: Δάκτυλος Θεοῦ ἐστὶν τοῦτο.⁴³ 2) It is claimed that if ἐν πνεύματι Θεοῦ had been original, there is no obvious reason why Luke, for whom πνεῦμα is a favourite term, should have replaced πνεῦμα with δάκτυλος.⁴⁴ 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. Morgenthauer, *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.

⁴⁰ Cf. Marshall, *Luke* 519; Fitzmyer, *Luke* 962; Hofius, *βλασφημέω* etc. *EWNT* I 532.

⁴¹ See e.g. Manson, *Teaching* 82f.; A. Richardson, *The Miracle Stories of the Gospels* (London 1959) 39; Fuller, *Mission* 37; Barrett, *The Holy Spirit* 62f.; E. Jünger, *Paulus und Jesus, Eine Untersuchung zur Präzisierung der Frage nach dem Ursprung der Christologie* (Tübingen 1962) 185f.

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 אֲצַבֵּעַ אֶל־יָדָם וְהָאֵשׁ הָיְתָה בָּהֶם.

⁴⁴ Cf. S. Schulz, *Q—Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zürich 1972) 205, n. 218; Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader* 65, n. 109.

Matthew is quite likely to have changed δάκτυλος to πνεῦμα 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 ἐν δακτύλῳ 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.⁴⁵ 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 God⁴⁶ and once of the heavens which are the work of his fingers.⁴⁷ Neither of these occurrences comes closer to our text than Exodus 8:19. However, there is another text, which has usually been overlooked.⁴⁸ 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 (ὥσει LXX) χειρὸς 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 ἔργα 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.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the difference between Matthew's πνεῦμα and Luke's δάκτυλος is not really as great as it may appear.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ Moreover, it is perhaps an overstatement to claim that πνεῦμα 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 πνεῦμα, 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.

⁵¹ See H. Schlier, δάκτυλος in *TDNT* II, 20f. and R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, 'A Note on Matthew XII, 28 par. Luke XI, 20', *NTS* 2 (1964-5) 167ff. For the Spirit as the agent of God's action see Zechariah 4:6; Daniel 5:12, and, in a Kingdom context, Isaiah 61:1.

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 whom blasphemy is unforgivable, but between the person of the SM in his present hiddenness 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.

⁵³ Cf. Lövestam, *Spiritus Blasphemia* 8: 'Hinsichtlich der Frage nach dem Kontext des Spruches muss zunächst festgestellt werden, dass der Zusammenhang bei Lk kaum primär sein kann'.

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'.⁵⁵

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 "ἤγγικεν and "ἔφθασεν?

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· ἤγγικεν γὰρ 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· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. This saying has a parallel in Mark 1:15: πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. Luke records a parallel circumstance (4:43f.; 8:1), but without a corresponding Kingdom saying. Matthew's third occurrence records Jesus' injunction to the Twelve, κηρύσσετε λέγοντες ὅτι "ἤγγικεν 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 ἤγγικεν only in connection with the Mission of the Seventy: λέγετε αὐτοῖς, "ἤγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (10:9). This they were to repeat in protestation if repulsed (Lk 10:11). Finally, in the Beelzebul controversy Jesus is represented as saying: εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι Θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν 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: ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ and ἔφθασεν 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 ἡγγικεν as ἔφθασεν⁵⁶ while the proponents of Futuristic Eschatology have taken ἔφθασεν as if it were ἡγγικεν.⁵⁷ 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 ἡγγικεν as ἔφθασεν chiefly on the grounds that 'in the LXX ἐγγιζειν is sometimes used (chiefly in past tenses) to translate the Hebrew verb *naga'* and the Aramaic verb *m'ta'*'.⁵⁸ Since both of these verbs are also translated by the verb φθάνειν, Dodd surmised that ἐγγιζειν and φθάνειν were identical in meaning. He found corroboration for this standpoint in the answer which the Modern Greek waiter gives on being called, sc. ἔφθασα, κύριε!, which Dodd took to mean 'Here I am, sir!' J. Y. Campbell⁵⁹ was not slow to react, pointing out Dodd's error with regards to the LXX,⁶⁰ which Dodd corrected in the third edition of his book.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. Dodd's clear-cut statement in his argumentation against J. Y. Campbell's criticism ('The Kingdom of God has Come', *ExpT* 48 [1936-7] 91-4), 'I take ἔφθασεν at its face value, and try to make ἡγγικεν conform' ('The Kingdom of God has Come', *ExpT* 48 [1936-7] 188).

⁵⁷ Cf. Dodd, *ExpT* 48 (1936-7) 188, 'Mr. Campbell takes ἡγγικεν at its face value and tries to make ἔφθασεν conform.' See further R. Morgenthauer, *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 ἐγγιζειν. 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: בָּרַךְ בער (1x); חיה ל- (1x); חיה ער (1x); הרס (1x); חש (1x); חש (1x); יחל (1x); יקש (1x); כנף (1x); קה (1x); ממש (2x); נע (6x); נש (40x), and קרב (72x); more analytically: קרב (29x); קרוב (28x), the rest being distributed among seven other words of this root). The figures show that the LXX used ἐγγιζειν 112 times to translate words which strictly indicate 'nearness', and eighteen times more loosely. ממש which is met only twice, and נע six times, do not at all have the perfect ἡγγικεν (as Dodd had stated in the first edition of his *Parables*), which occurs only seven times, always translating the root קרב.

Campbell also pointed out that 'Surely when a Greek waiter says, *ἔφθασα, κύριε!*, he does not mean, "Here I am, sir" (Dodd, 43, n.1), but, "Just coming, sir!"'.⁶² 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, "*ἔφθασα, κύριε!*" Thus, *ἔφθασεν* η [sic] *βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* expresses in the most vivid and forcible way the fact that the Kingdom of God has actually arrived'.⁶³ Thus, his conclusion is: 'It would appear therefore that no difference of meaning is intended between *ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* and *ἡγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ*'.⁶⁴ Dodd's interpretation of *ἡγγικεν* and *ἔφθασεν* 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 *ἐγγίλζειν* and *φθάνειν* 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 *ἐγγίλζειν* is sometimes used (chiefly in past tenses) to translate the Hebrew verb *naga'* and the Aramaic verb *m'ta'* and states that 'both... mean "to reach", "to arrive"',⁶⁵ what he means is that *ἐγγίλζειν*, which occurs 161 times in the OT, translates six of the 149 instances of *naga'* and two of the eight instances of *m'ta'* (all in Daniel). But as M. Black pointed out 'Where it [sc. *ἐγγίλζειν*] does render these verbs, it is always in the sense "to arrive at", "to draw near to", never absolutely "to arrive", "to come"'.⁶⁶

Cf. C. T. Craig, 'Realized Eschatology', *JBL* 56 (1937) 20: 'Whenever the perfect of *ἐγγίλζειν* has a temporal reference it must be translated with a future significance "to be near"'. *φθάνειν* 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: *נָגַח* (1x); *דָּבַק* (1x); *יָחַד* (1x); *מָסַח* (מָסַח) (8x, all in Daniel), and *נָגַח* (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.

The verb ἐγγίζειν, by nature a linear verb, is formed from the adjective ἐγγύς ('near')⁶⁷ 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 ἀπτάω, θιγγάνειν and ψάβειν.⁶⁸ The two main sense are illustrated by the LXX, which uses it seventy-two times for קָרַב and forty times for נָגַח both of which mean "to come near", and six times for נָגַח ('to touch'). The meaning of 'nearness' may be spatial or temporal. In the NT ἐγγίζειν occurs twenty-five times in a spatial sense⁶⁹ and seventeen times in a temporal sense.⁷⁰ In all of these instances the meaning is 'to draw near'.⁷¹

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.⁷² 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 Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης III (1964) 2196 defines the first meaning of ἐγγίζω as 'φθάνω ἐγγύς', etc.

⁶⁹ Matthew 21:1; 24:46; Mark 11:1f.; 14:42; Luke 7:12; 12:33; 15:1; 15:25; 18:35; 18:40; 19:29; 19:37; 19:41; 22:47; 24:15; 24:28; Acts 9:3; 10:9; 21:33; 22:6; 23:15; Philippians 2:30; Hebrews 7:19; James 4:8 (*bis*). Fuller, *Mission* 21, says 'twenty-four' times, but this may be due to his having overlooked the second instance in James 4:8.

⁷⁰ Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 21:34; 26:45; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9; 10:11; 21:8, 20, 28; 22:1; Acts 7:17; Romans 13:12; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:8; 1 Peter 4:7.

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: οἱ δὲ φθάσαντες εἰς πόλιν τινα τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου μεγάλην.

ii. *Modern Interpretations of Φθάνειν*

Fuller, with A. Richardson,⁷³ T. W. Manson,⁷⁴ and Barrett,⁷⁵ 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'.⁷⁶ Thus Fuller, on the basis of this typology and the one in Isaiah 40ff. (the Cyrus prophecy), ascribes to ἐφθασεν a future sense;⁷⁷ Jesus 'is using the familiar prophetic device of speaking of a future event as though it were already present',⁷⁸ and again 'The Kingdom of God has not yet come, but it is near, so near that it is operative in advance'.⁷⁹ N. 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'.⁸⁰ 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'.⁸¹ 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.⁸²

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'.⁸³ J. Jeremias⁸⁴ 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,⁸⁵ takes ἔφθασεν 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.'⁸⁶ Accordingly, he takes ἔφθασεν not as "'has come to you" but something like "has come very close to you"'"⁸⁷ 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.'⁸⁸ Lundström tends to agree with R. Schnackenburg's⁸⁹ '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.'⁹⁰ Ἐφθασεν, 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'.⁹¹ Nevertheless, he

⁸³ *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (Edinburgh, London 1963) 244.

⁸⁴ *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* 41956.

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.

⁸⁸ 'Auf keinen Fall kann [Mt] 12:28 Anlass sein, von einer Gegenwart des Reiches Gottes so zu sprechen...' *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).

⁹¹ *Gottes Herrschaft* 109. Cf. M. Dibelius, *Jesus* 79: 'Man kann also Jesu Botschaft und Jesu Taten nicht trennen von seiner Person'.

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. Kümmel⁹² takes ἐφθασεν 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.⁹³ He is described by G. R. Beasley-Murray⁹⁴ 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.'⁹⁵ Ladd bases his study on G. Dalman's insight⁹⁶ that βασιλεία (מלכות) 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',⁹⁷ he notes that 'God's Kingdom in Jewish literature has almost always the abstract meaning of God's rule',⁹⁸ and applies this sense to the great bulk of his investigation.⁹⁹ Without an extended examination Ladd takes

⁹² *Verheißung* 99ff. (*Promise* 107f.).

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.

⁹⁴ *Jesus and the Future*, 103 (cited by G. E. Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* 123).

⁹⁵ *Jesus and the Kingdom* 123f.

⁹⁶ *The Words of Jesus* (Edinburgh, 1902); see esp. 91–147.

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'.

⁹⁸ *Jesus and the Kingdom* 128f.

⁹⁹ See *Jesus and the Kingdom* 123 for a list of authorities who ascribe to βασιλεία an abstract sense.

ἔφθασεν 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 ἔφθασεν in the usual way as 'has come', basing his standpoint on the lexica, and chides the advocates of Futurist 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.'

¹⁰² 'Wir "futuristisch" wiederum nicht im Sinne eines Ausstandes als Abstand, sondern im Sinne einer in die Gegenwart hereinstehenden Zukunft zu verstehen haben: Die Zukunft der Gottesherrschaft ragt als Finger Gottes in die Gegenwart herein', *ibid.* 185.

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 ἔφθασεν has played in discussions of the Kingdom of God, I now turn my attention to the meaning of ἔφθασεν.

iii. *The Aorist ἔφθασεν*

We saw above that Dodd took the Greek waiter's 'ἔφθασα, 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, ἔφθασα, κύριε!' Thus, ἔφθασεν 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 ἔφθασα 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 ἔφθασα! and the actual arrival is a relative

¹⁰⁸ *Parables* 36 n.15.

¹⁰⁹ *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament I: Prolegomena* (Edinburgh 31908) 247 (135).

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 ἔφθασεν, 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. (ἐκείνες) κακομολῶν μου! (lit. 'you are/will be burned...') = I'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 Ἐφθασα! means 'you can consider me as being (virtually) there'; it is at least as vivid as 'I'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 λείψεις!, which has a perfect parallel in Modern Greek: (ἐ)χάθηκα ἂν μ' ἀφήσης! = 'I'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, ἂν μὴ τις μένῃ 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 gnomic 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: ἂν δέ γε, ὦμαι, φύσιν ἱκανὴν γένηται ἔχων ὁ ἀνὴρ, πάντα ταῦτα ἀποσεισάμενος... ἐπανοστὰς ἀνεφάνη δεσπότης ἡμέτερος ὁ δοῦλος, καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐξέλαμψε τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον. See further Euripides, *Medea*, 77: ἀπωλόμεθ' ἄρ' εἰ κακὸν προσοίσομεν νέον παλαιῷ, and Aristophanes, *Equites*: ἦσθην ἀπειλαῖς, ἐγέλασα ψολοκομπίαις, ἀπεπυδάρισα μόθωνα, περιεκόκκασα. 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: ἂν σὲ πιάσῃ ἐχάθηκες! = 'If he catches you, you are done' (lit. 'you will be lost', i.e. 'it will be the end of you').

έμοι, έβλήθη έξω . . . και έξηράνθη,¹¹⁵ the stress is probably more on the certainty than the immediacy of judgment.¹¹⁶ Here belongs also 1 Thessalonians 2:16: *έφθασεν δέ έπ' αυτούς ή όργή εις τέλος*, while certainty is primary in John 15:8: *έν τούτῳ έδοξάσθη ό πατήρ μου ίνα καρπόν πολλόν φέρητε και γενήσεσθε έμοι μαθηταί*.¹¹⁷ Jannaris¹¹⁸ shows that occasionally the perfect instead of the aorist may be used, and quotes Romans 14:13: *έν φάγῃ κατακέκριται*.

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: *ήκει τὸ πέρας έπὶ σέ τὸν κατοικοῦντα τήν γῆν, ήκει ό καιρός, ήγγικεν ή ήμέρα ... νῦν έγγύθεν έκχεῶ τήν όργήν μου*. The verb used is *ήκω*, 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 *ήγγικεν ή ήμέρα*, (סוף עת), which indicates that only nearness is in view, while further down the idea is made explicitly future by the expression *νῦν έγγύθεν έκχεῶ τήν όργήν μου έπὶ σέ* (על עמך יצא חמתו).¹¹⁹ In the Nebuchadnezzar story (Daniel 4) *έφθασεν* occurs several times with futuristic sense: 4:24 (Θ)· *τοῦτο ή σύγκρισις αὐτοῦ, βασιλεῦ, και σύγκριμα 'Υψίστου έστίν, ό έφθασεν έπὶ τὸν κύριόν μου τὸν βασιλέα, και σέ εκδιώξουσιν...*, where the futuristic sense of the aorist *έφθασεν* is underscored by the future *εκδιώξουσιν*.¹²⁰ **Εφθασεν* in v. 28 may be constative. However, *παρήλθεν* από σοῦ in v. 31, as also the LXX perfect *άφήρηται*, are clearly futuristic. The same may be said of words interpreting the message on the wall (5:26ff.): *έμέτρησεν*

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: *πῦρ ήλθον βαλεῖν έπὶ τήν γῆν, και τί θέλω ει ήδη ανήφθη*, 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: *έλήλυθεν ή ὥρα ίνα δοξασθῇ ό υἱός του ανθρώπου*. Other examples are I Corinthians 7:28: *έν δέ και γαμήσις, ούχ ήμαρτες* and Galatians 5:4: *κατηργήθητε από του Χριστού οἱ τίνες έν νόμῳ δικαιοσύνης, τῆς χάριτος έξεπέσατε*.

¹¹⁸ *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 437 §1856.

¹¹⁹ See also Ez 7:7, 10, 12.

¹²⁰ The LXX here has *ήξει* in place of *έφθασεν*!

ἐπλήρωσεν, ἐστάθη-εὐρέθη, διήρηται-ἐδόθη. 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 ἐδόθη.¹²¹ In all these cases the Aramaic uses the perfect,¹²² 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 ἔφθασεν in Matthew 12:28, on the basis of any hypothetically dissimilar use in the Aramaic behind the Greek text. The word may have been ܡܩܕ, as Dodd,¹²³ following Dalman,¹²⁴ maintained. As we have seen, this word could be used idiomatically like ἔφθασεν in Greek. Could this idiomatic use of ἔφθασεν 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 ἔδωκε.

¹²² MT 4:21 מלכא די מסא על-מראי מלכא; MT 4:28 מלכותא עדתא מנך; MT 5:26f מלכא—השלמה; MT 7:27 מלכותא—ידיבה; MT 7:27 מלכותא—ידיבה; MT 7:27 מלכותא—ידיבה; MT 7:27 מלכותא—ידיבה.

¹²³ *ExpT* 48 (1936–7) 138ff.

¹²⁴ *The Words of Jesus* 107.