Jesus and the Kingdom

• The ethics of Jesus
• The identity of Jesus

The Ethics of Jesus

• A focal point for controversy.
  – The center of Christianity?
  – Highest expression of Christian faith?
  – The “remains” of Christianity after the supernatural is eliminated?
  – An impossible ideal?
  – A new legalism?
  – Not practical?

The Ethics of Jesus

• Eschatological ethics.
• Kingdom ethics - “already” and “not yet.”
• Both gift and demand - Gabe und Aufgabe.
• Inbreaking kingdom makes these ethics both possible and necessary.
The Ethics of Jesus

• How do Jesus’ ethics reflect his Jewish heritage?
  – Golden Rule in rabbinic sources (negative form).
  – Teaches on his own authority.
  – Both continuous and discontinuous with OT law.
  – Authoritatively reinterprets OT law.

The Ethics of Jesus

• See handout on scholarly approaches.
• Absolute ethics.
• Inward as well as outward righteousness.
• Expression of one’s experience of the kingdom of God.
• Founded on an absolute commitment to Jesus.
• Expressed in love of God and neighbor.

The Ethics of Jesus

What should we do today with the ethics of Jesus?
The Identity of Jesus

• Ladd focuses on titles (traditional way).
• Others examine indirect evidence.
• S. Neill: Jesus spoke and acted with uncommon authority.
• J. Jeremias: Jesus’ “prepositive use of Amen.”

The Identity of Jesus

• What is “messiah” and how does this title relate to Jesus?

The Identity of Jesus

• What is the background of this title before Jesus?
The Identity of Jesus

• How does it figure in Jesus’ ministry?

The Identity of Jesus

• The Son of Man - does not mean Jesus in his humanity.
• Senses in OT:
  – A human being (Psalm 8; Ezekiel 2:1).
  – Eschatological figure of Daniel 7.
• Three issues:
  – Did Jesus mean “I, a human being”? 
  – Did he use it with Daniel 7 in mind? 
  – If so, did he refer to himself or someone else?

The Identity of Jesus

• Three categories of sayings:
  – Son of Man in earthly life (present) 
  – Suffering Son of Man (forthcoming) 
  – Eschatological figure (future; Daniel 7)
• Do all three categories go back to Jesus? 
• Jesus may have used this term because it was ambiguous. 
• Jesus used Suffering Servant to give new content to the Son of Man figure.
The Identity of Jesus

- The **Son of God** does not refer, in the first place, to Jesus in his divinity.
- Two parts to this discussion:
  - What “Son of God” would have meant in the 1st century.
  - Jesus’ filial consciousness.
- See handout “Son of God and Lord in the Synoptics.”

The Identity of Jesus

What has stood out to you in the Christology of the Synoptics?

Of what value is this Christology for the life of the church?