


Jesus' Disciples as a Contrast Community

Session Two
Recharge 2013




Jesus' Disciples as a Contrast Community

- Jesus gathers disciple community/eschatological Israel
 - Jesus forms them into contrast community
 - Jesus renews them for their vocation
 - Jesus sends them to the nations
- 



Kingdom and Gathering

- Jesus announces of the kingdom of God
 - For the Jew that meant gathering of end-time Israel
- 




Gathering of Israel

The gathering of dispersed Israel was ‘so self-evident that this hope would have been cherished even without the Old Testament prophecies.’ (Schürer)

‘Raise a banner to gather together our dispersed, and assemble us from the four corners of the earth. Blessed art thou, Lord, who gatherest the banished of thy people Israel.’ (10th blessing)

‘Gather all the tribes of Jacob together, that they may receive their inheritance as in the days of old’ (Ecclus. 36.11).






Kingdom and Gathering

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said, ‘The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’

... Come follow me. [Simon, Andrew, James, John]





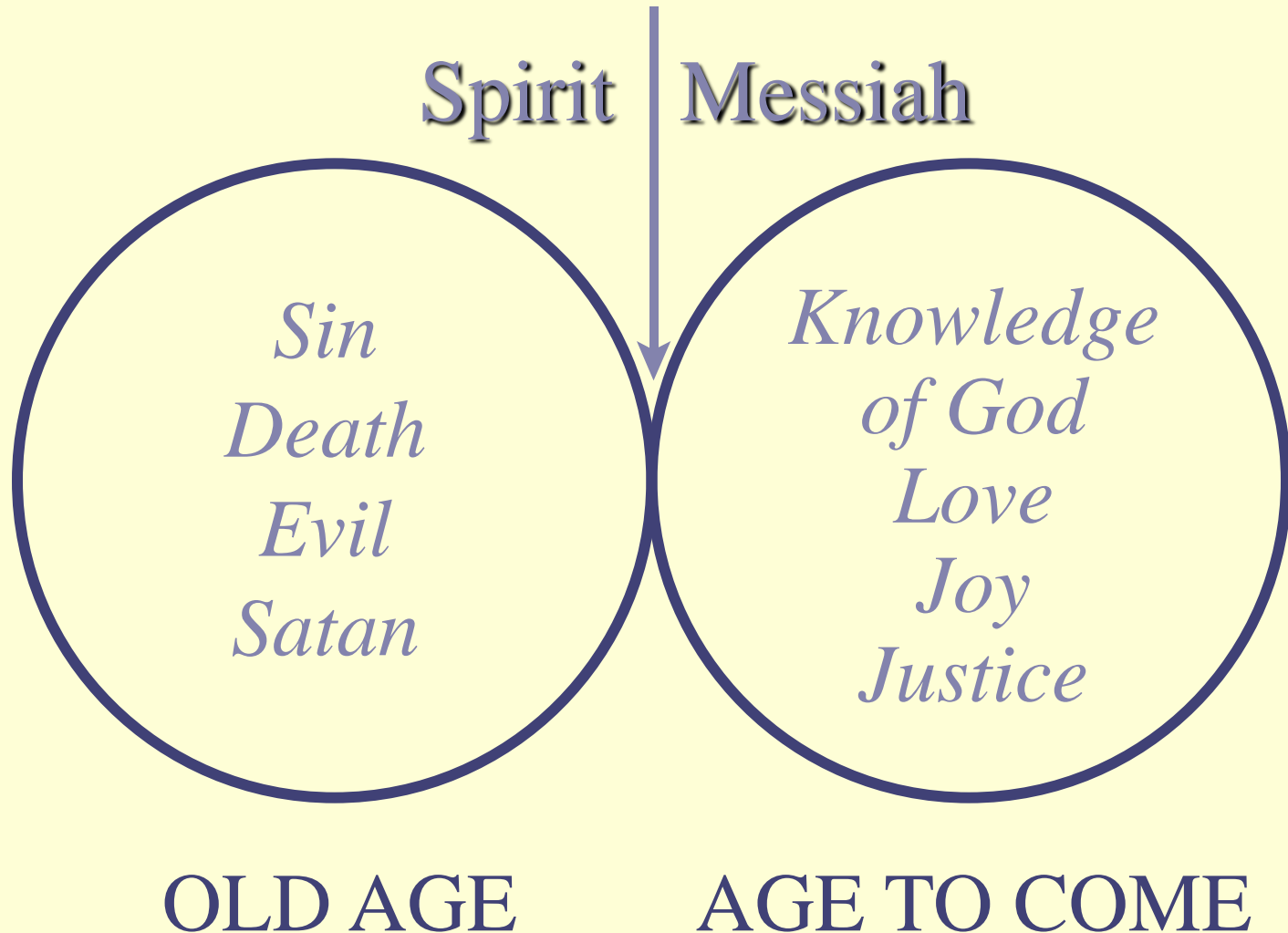
Already-Not Yet

● Kingdom already here but not yet come!

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Matt 12.28)

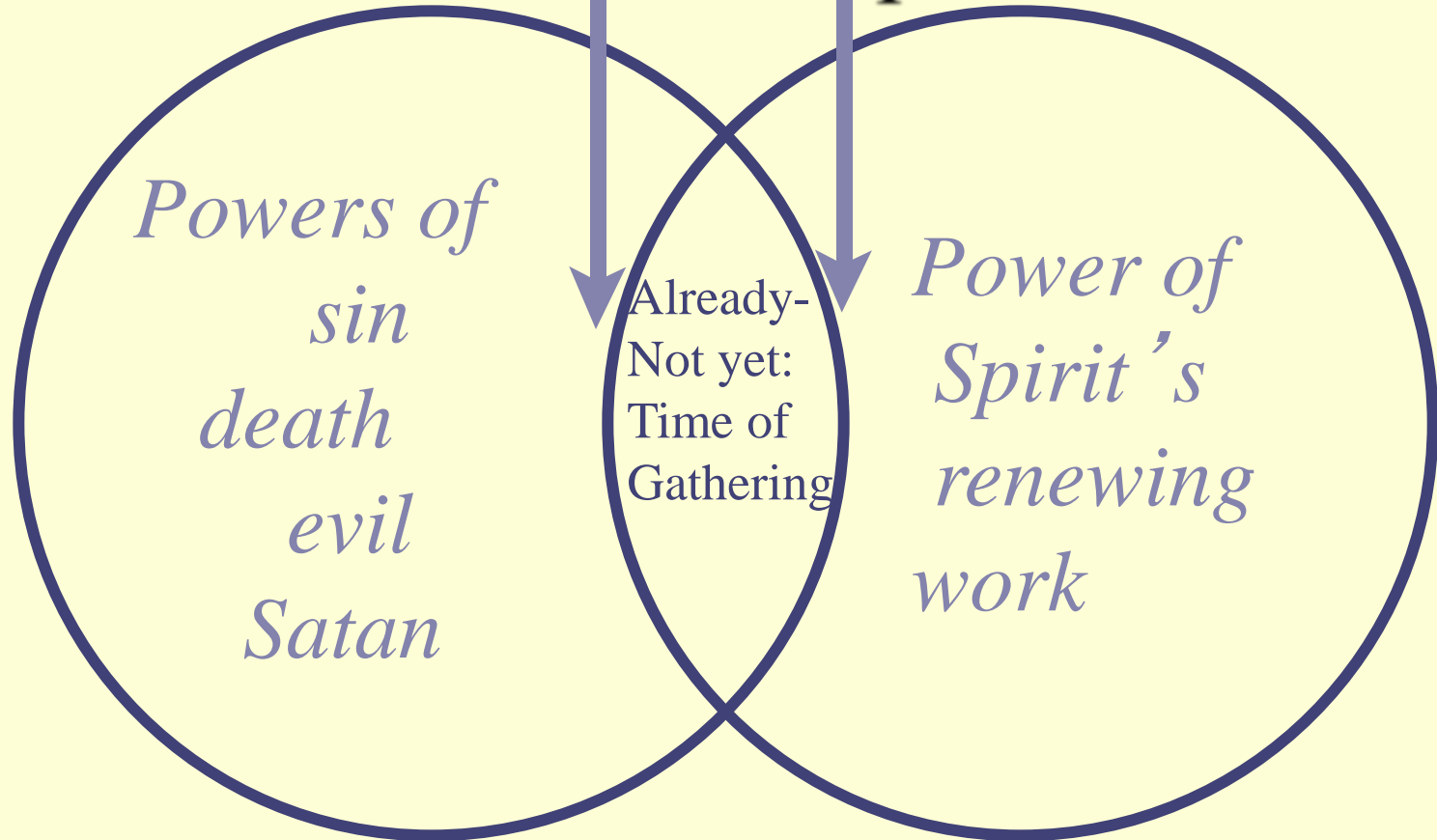
Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of God . . . (Matt 7.21)

Prophetic Expectation



New Testament Fulfillment

Messiah Spirit




OLD AGE

AGE TO COME



Jesus Gathers Israel

- Announcement of the kingdom
 - Already-not yet era of kingdom
 - Time of gathering
- 




Jesus gathers a people

‘After a history of more than a millenium [sic], the people of God could neither be founded nor established, but only *gathered* and *restored*.’ (Lohfink)


‘. . . the *only* significance of the whole of Jesus’ activity is to gather the eschatological people of God.’ (Joachim Jeremias)

‘That God has chosen and sanctified his people in order to make it a contrast-society in the midst of the other nations was for Jesus the self-evident background of all his actions.’ In Jesus we see God’s ‘eschatological action’ to ‘restore or even re-establish his people, in order to carry out definitively and irrevocably his plan of having a holy people in the midst of the nations.’ (Lohfink)






Jesus Gathers and Renews Israel

- Announcement of kingdom
 - Already-not yet era of kingdom
 - Time of gathering
 - Sent only to lost sheep of Israel (Matt 15.24)
 - Appoints 12 as foundation of end-time Israel
 - Three images of gathering
 - Gathering scattered sheep into fold
 - Gathering guests to banquet
 - Gathering in harvest
- 



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community/eschatological Israel
 - Jesus forms them into contrast
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A Contrast Community

- Jesus gathers disciple community
- Forms them into contrast community
 - Invitation to centre life in Him

‘Follow me . . .’

Much more than Jewish discipleship






A Contrast Community


- Jesus gathers disciple community
- Forms them into contrast community
 - Invitation to centre life in Him
 - Summons to be part of what He is doing

He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority over demons (Mk 3.14-15)






Portrait of a disciple in Matthew

- A disciple is invited to join Jesus and his community in a mission to make known kingdom of God in life, word, deed
 - A disciple is to centre their whole life in Jesus (not the Torah) and become like him
 - A disciple is to obey Jesus as Lord and not simply respect him as teacher (Rabbi)
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A Contrast Community

- Jesus gathers disciple community
 - Jesus forms them into contrast community
 - Invitation to centre life in Him
 - Summons to be part of what He is doing
 - Teaching
- 




Teaching to form contrast community

- Challenge to the ethnocentric hatred
and separation






Faith warped by oppression

- Monotheism: Exclusive possession of Jews
 - Election and covenant: Ethnocentric privilege
 - Torah: Badge of ethnocentric privilege
 - Land and temple: Symbols of ethnocentric privilege
 - Hope: Judgement on Gentiles and compromising Jews; salvation for *us*
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Background

- Seething cauldron of eschatological expectation
 - Messianic movements
 - Many gathering movements
- “... there [had been] a whole series of attempts in this direction. It is not an exaggeration to say that the whole of contemporary Jewish religious life was fundamentally determined by it.” (Joachim Jeremias)
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Background

- Seething cauldron of eschatological expectation
 - Messianic movements
 - Many gathering movements
 - Underlying *all* of these communities:
hatred of and separation from Gentiles
- 



‘Anti-gentile attitudes . . . inspired many groups, permeating the whole Jewish population varying only in their intensity.’ (Martin Goodman)


‘. . . dominant popular expectation eagerly awaited the day of divine vengeance, especially on Rome, and the final destruction of the Gentiles. “No Gentile will have a part of the world to come,” was the teaching of that consistent upholder of the ancient tradition, R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (c.AD 90). “Hell is the destiny of the Gentiles. There is no ransom for the Gentiles.” (Joachim Jeremias)






Smashed like a potter's jar

May God raise up a king and endow him with “the strength to destroy unrighteous rulers, to purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction; in wisdom and in righteousness to drive out the sinners from the inheritance; to smash the arrogance of sinners like a potter's jar; to shatter all their substance with an iron rod; to destroy the unlawful nations with the word of his mouth.” (Psalms of Solomon)






Erecting high fences to keep separate from pagan defilement

- Compromise of Jews with pagan culture
 - Sabbath, circumcision, food and purity laws
 - Eighteen decrees to enact strict separation and prevent defilement
 - Gentiles forbidden in temple
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A New Way: Restoring Israel to their missional calling

‘Love of enemies instead of their
destruction; unconditional forgiveness
instead of retaliation; readiness to
suffer instead of using force; blessing
for peacemakers instead of hymns of
hate and revenge’ (Hans Kung)





A Contrast Community

“The contrast between Jesus and all attempts at forming a ‘remnant’ group emerges at one quite definite point: *separation* from outsiders.” (Jeremias)


Gospels: Controversy with Pharisees






Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7)

... a challenge to Israel to be Israel. . . .
an appeal to Jesus' hearers to discover
their true vocation as the eschatological
people of YHWH, and to do so by
following the praxis he was marking out
for them, rather than the way of the other
would-be leaders of the time. (NT Wright)






Matthew 5.1-16

- Identifies with Israel's longing for the kingdom to come, and for its blessings of comfort, inheritance of the earth, justice and righteousness
 - Preconditions: poverty of spirit, meekness, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, and patient suffering
 - As such, they would be light and city on a hill
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Teaching to form contrast community

- Challenge to the ethnocentric hatred
and separation
 - Solidarity with poor and marginalised
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Welcoming Socio-Religious Outcasts

- Friend of tax-collectors, sinners, prostitutes, lepers
 - Doctor comes to sick
 - Lost: Sin, God's judgement and kingdom
- 




Admittance to the Qumran Community

Neither the blind nor the lame

Nor the deaf nor the dumb


Nor the lepers nor those whose flesh is
blemished

Shall be admitted to the council of the
community






Welcoming Socio-Religious Outcasts

- Friend of tax-collectors, sinners, prostitutes, lepers
 - Doctor comes to sick
 - Lost: Sin, God's judgement and kingdom
 - Healings
 - Parables: Banquet, Lost (cf. Lk 14, 15)
 - Table fellowship
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Invitation, summons, teaching . . .

‘Thus, there arose in the midst of ancient Israel—unobtrusively at first and yet irreversibly—the new society planned by God.’ (Lohfink)






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 - Death, resurrection, Spirit
- 




Death and Resurrection

- Cosmic scope: Turning point in history
 - Death: Decisive defeat of powers of old age
 - Resurrection: Inauguration of renewed creation
 - Spirit brings life of new creation
 - Gathered end-time community may now participate in life of kingdom/new creation/resurrection
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Jesus Gathers and Renews Israel

- Commissions disciple-community/eschatological Israel (Matt 28.18-20; Lk 24.45-49; John 20.19-23)
 - Acts will tell the story of way Gentiles grafted on to this gathered, formed, renewed, and sent contrast community
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