A Critique of Martyn’s Commentary on Galatians with an Emphasis on the Kingdom of God

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Bible Translation: Unless otherwise stated the Bible translations are taken from the New American Standard 1995 Version.
I. Introduction

My intention, as the sole author of this dissertation, is to present a critique of the commentary on Galatians written by J. Louis Martyn.¹ Martyn’s work is about God’s liberating invasion of the cosmos. He attempts to articulate the shape of that “invasion” and how it brings a truly crucified cosmos and a genuinely new creation. To achieve this Martyn chose to make his particular focus, the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Galatians. The theological centre of his commentary is “God sent His Son” something that he claims then “derails all through trains.”² Martyn believes that from all of Paul's admonitions and self-defense one can reconstruct down to the most minute detail, what the false teachers in Galatia were saying, how they had distorted earlier Pauline teaching and how Paul's words in this epistle correct the false teaching and further elucidate Paul's own thought.³ Before embarking upon the task of this dissertation, it will be of interest to consider why Martyn chose the book of Galatians to deliver his work and what some of the critics are saying about it. As to the choice of the book, Martyn answered this question in an interview with Douglas Harink and Joshua B. Davis. Martyn presents this as somewhat of a divine mystery how he became captured by the book. An excerpt from the transcript states,

3 Ibid.
He spoke of a time in his 20s (working as an electrical engineer), when he attended a Bible class on Galatians by a learned teacher, Mr. M. It was the message of freedom in Galatians that seized me… At lunchtime, [back at his work] I sometimes just went off with this little New Testament, which was in my pocket, and ate the words in this book [Galatians]. Years later, while teaching at Union Seminary in New York, “when I got the invitation [from the Anchor Bible editors to write the commentary on Galatians], I thought, ‘This is the circle…’ I remember going downtown, having lunch with the people who were running the Anchor Bible at the time, and it just fit together.⁴

Many commentators have applauded Martyn’s work, claiming it to be groundbreaking. On the back-cover, Anchor books (not Martyn’s publisher) state,

As its predecessors in the Anchor Bible series have done “Galatians successfully makes available all the significant historical and linguistic knowledge which bears on the interpretation of this important New Testament book. A personal letter written by Paul in the mid-first century to friends in the churches emerging in the region of Galatia, where it was circulated, Galatians is down to earth and pragmatic. This biblical book requires the modern reader to take a seat in one of the Galatian congregations, to listen to Paul's letter with Galatian ears, and discern the contours of Paul's theology. That is exactly what Dr. Martyn makes possible in his marvelous commentary, with its careful translation and creative interpretation of Galatians. Though relatively brief, Paul's letter is filled with complex theological and historical issues that demand a thorough treatment. Readers will not be disappointed in Dr. Martyn's sensitive handling of difficult

passages, and all will be delighted to have a fresh translation that makes sense to our modern ears. All in all, this volume will stand out as a shining example of top-notch scholarship written for the general reader.\(^5\)

Denver Seminary states that the volume has numerous strengths and fresh contributions to make to an exegesis of Galatians.\(^6\) The author (not identified) asserts that,

The apocalyptic heart of Paul's thought is regularly demonstrated, an important reminder in a revisionist age that increasingly tends to make wisdom rather than apocalyptic the "mother" of Christian theology. Martyn rightly rejects the mystical interpretation of expressions about the believer being in Christ (or Christ in the believer) in favor of "the dominant motif" of "the resurrected Christ's powerful invasion, seen on a personal level" (p. 258).

However, Martyn’s work has not been without criticism either, with critics voicing similar concerns to what this dissertation is endeavouring to raise. The focus or criticism is not so much about what Martyn has said but more concerning what he has overlooked. Of particular interest here is Martyn’s concept of “invasion” and the ensuing debate re continuity/discontinuity. The following reviews bring some insight to this. John Anthony Dunne states,

Their emphasis [speaking of those who subscribe to Martyn’s views] is on discontinuity, duality and dichotomy, which coheres neither with first-century apocalyptic literature and its antecedents, nor with the letter to the Galatians. Their

\(^5\) Martyn, Galatians, Back cover.

\(^6\) http://www.denverseminary.edu/dj/articles1998/0200/0207.
nuanced notion of apocalyptic has led to an unnecessary bifurcation between apocalyptic and covenant (not to mention Heilsgeschichte\(^7\)) in the interpretation of Paul.\(^8\)

Dunne argues that there is a real dichotomy in relation to the discontinuity that Paul does articulate (i.e. with The Law), and the dichotomy reflected in apocalyptic literature, namely, the division between the present evil age and the glorious age to come. He accuses Martyn of lacking historical precision (and possibly theological forthrightness) and neglecting features of Galatians, such as suffering and persecution. This is the reason, Dunne states, that Martyn misinterprets what Paul is saying. According to Dunne,

\[
\text{… apocalyptic hope often arises in the absence of the realisation of covenantal promises and expectations; a covenantal disconnect is created and aggravated by crises and hardships of various sorts, hence the need for apocalyptic hope. Suffering therefore ties together the strands of apocalyptic and covenant in Galatians. If Martyn’s \textit{apocalyptic reading} was truly apocalyptic in a first-century historical sense, it would have integrated the imagery of suffering and persecution found in the letter.}\]

Douglas Harink at first seems favourable when he states,

\textit{An increasing number of theologians…identify Martyn’s Galatians and Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul as of crucial importance for orienting and}

\(^7\) \textit{heilsgeschichtlich} is a term used to translate redemptive-historical. 
\(^9\) Ibid.
forming their basic approach to Christian theology. In contemporary parlance,

Martyn’s work has become for many a theological “game changer.”

But then, in another review, where the issue of continuity and discontinuity is discussed, Harink states that he does not accept that the coming of the Messiah was the culmination of all creation. He argues, as does this thesis, that,

… the key to grasping the significance of Paul’s good news is to suggest that Paul frames the coming of Christ and the Spirit within the context of an overarching creational and covenantal narrative, and as the “climax” that decisively resolves the plot, tensions, and expectations of this narrative.

The chief contention of the second article of Harink’s is that the ‘apocalyptic reading’ does not resemble the historical phenomenon of Jewish apocalyptic literature, and is too limited by choosing to restrict itself to Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Harink offers a critique of what it means for Paul, according to Martyn, to be an apocalyptic thinker, placing his emphasis on discontinuity, duality and dichotomy, which he claims, coheres neither with first-century apocalyptic literature and its antecedents, nor with the letter to the Galatians.

He goes on to argue that Martyn’s focus on discontinuity hardly constitutes apocalyptic in a first-century historical sense. Rather, its specific emphasis owes its articulation to the theology of Karl Barth. The dismissal of continuity by Martyn

12 Ibid.
also results in a lack of historical precision and ongoing influence the coming of Christ instituted in the new world that follows. Harink adds to his argument by saying that some of the features Martyn has neglected in Galatians, such as suffering and persecution, cohere with the apocalyptic character of the letter, and are common features of apocalyptic broadly. In fact, the division between apocalyptic and covenant in scholarship on Galatians is bridged by the themes of conflict and crisis. What Martyn has missed, according to Harink, is that apocalyptic hope often arises in the absence of the realisation of covenantal promises and expectations; a covenantal disconnect is created and aggravated by crises and hardships of various sorts, hence the need for apocalyptic hope. Suffering therefore ties together the strands of apocalyptic and covenant in Galatians. If Martyn’s ‘apocalyptic reading’ was truly apocalyptic in a first-century historical sense, it would have, Harink argues, integrated the imagery of suffering and persecution found in the letter.\textsuperscript{13}

It is from this point then that this dissertation proceeds, firstly to gain some understanding of what it is that Martyn is actually saying and then, secondly, to elucidate the issues that have become points of concern and to highlight what it is that Martyn has overlooked. It is my view that Martyn has misinterpreted what Paul has said, especially in regard to the theory of discontinuity that Martyn claims has taken place between the covenants as described in the Old Testament and the

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
New Covenant that came about as a result of the Incarnation. I will contend that Paul knew nothing of a complete disconnect with the past. Instead it will argue that the invasion of Christ paved the way for the role of the Kingdom of God to enter the created order, and for the church, along with the ongoing momentum of the kingdom, to embrace its mission as the vanguard of this operation of Christ’s apocalyptic redemption of the cosmos. In this context Martyn’s invasion should only be considered as part of the picture, a picture that concerns itself with the transformation of society and the call to humanity to return to God and embrace His ways.

I will also emphasise the absolute importance of covenant in the dealings between God and humanity and will begin building its evidence for this argument with the covenant that God made with Abrahamic (beginning in Genesis 12). One of the key issues I will seek to present, is how the covenant with Abraham set the scene for the ultimate sacrifice - that of God putting His Son Jesus Christ upon the altar with no provision for the torture and death of Jesus to be avoided, as was the case for Abraham with his son Isaac. This covenant is ultimately linked with Christ’s invasion and subsequent new covenant, as mentioned in Galatians 3. From this point I will highlight a more significant omission in Martyn’s work, that of the ongoing momentum of the Kingdom of God as prophesied in Daniel 2:44. Daniel describes a Kingdom that, upon moving forward through history, confronts and

destroys all other kingdoms that would rise up in opposition to it. This immovable and unshakeable kingdom is the very reason for which the covenantal and historical perspectives exist and that the “invasion” of Christ came to set in motion. Obviously, an important component of this is (spiritual) warfare - a topic Martyn makes much of in his commentary. Like Martyn, I will also wrestle with this topic, finding some commonality with Martyn but also differing on the origin of this conflict.

Finally, I will investigate what the true mission of the followers of Christ should look like, under the preface that those in Christ are called to take up the role that He commenced on earth, after He left to take up His seat at the right hand of the Father. This will allow us to describe the true Gospel as a call to salvation that requires its followers to become an expression of the Kingdom of God in both word and deed. It is this very mission, I will argue, that gives the world its meaning and purpose; it is one of the most essential duties that the church has to fulfil in the world at all times. Indeed, it was this very mission that enabled the Apostle Paul to endure the hardships he suffered throughout his ministry as described in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, a mission and calling that he also passed onto the church, training as many as he could to continue the work that had begun in Christ Jesus.

Before embarking upon this journey, I will first provide a brief explanation of how Martyn conceives of “the apocalyptic” in his work.
II Focus on Martyn

A. What is Apocalyptic?

The Apocalyptic Emphasis

By repeatedly stating that the subject of Paul’s letter is the “invasive” route that God has elected to take in order to make right what has gone wrong, Martyn sees Paul as addressing the question of what things look like when God, by entering the present evil age in Christ, has begun to set things right. To give the climactic answer to this question, Martyn does not refer to an improvement in the human situation, but instead claims that Paul is speaking of nothing less than the dawn of an entirely new creation. Martyn often refers to the coming of this new creation as “apocalyptic”. The use of the term “apocalyptic” by many modern-day authors has been somewhat diversified making it almost impossible to arrive at a common meaning. In fact, N. T. Wright stated, “this term has proved so slippery and many-sided in scholarly discourse that one is often tempted to declare a moratorium on it altogether.”\(^{15}\) However, because it is a central theme of Martyn’s, it is important to make an attempt to clarify the way in which he uses this term.

\(^{15}\) N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis, USA: Fortress Press, 2005), 41.
Martyn has famously shifted the focus of apocalyptic from the second advent of Christ, to the first, particularly to the cross, as the apocalyptic fulcrum for Paul’s theology.\textsuperscript{16} Despite this new perspective, Martyn remains in continuity with Käsemann and Barth, in claiming that the Christ event serves as God’s in-breaking to restore the world.\textsuperscript{17} According to Martyn, the Apostle Paul, in an unbridled way, speaks of nothing less than the dawn of the new creation. He posits that,

\begin{quote}
[T]he advent of the Son and of his Spirit is thus the cosmic, apocalyptic event. There was a “before” and there is now an “after.” And it is at the point at which the “after” invades the “before” that the Spirit and the Flesh have become a dynamic pair of opposites. They form an apocalyptic antimony characteristic of the dawn of God’s new creation.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

What Martyn is advocating here is that Paul speaks about what does and does not exist, not about what should and should not exist.

There are two different worlds or ages - the (old) cosmos and the new creation. These run in parallel with one another and are described by Martyn as the “present evil age” and “the new creation.”\textsuperscript{19} Martyn argues that Paul is celebrating with his readers that those in Christ have been delivered from the power of this “evil” age. However, the liberating dawn of this new creation is death. God’s idea of good news includes the crucifixion of God’s Son, of the world, and of human beings.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{16} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, pp. 85-156 summarise the heart of his argument.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 572.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 572-3.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 572-4.
\end{flushright}
Martyn makes much use of these two different ages, claiming that this distinction is fundamental to apocalyptic thought. He claims that these are not two opposing forces. According to Paul they are two contrasting periods, distinguished from one another by a radical change in relationship that human beings now have to these elements. The earlier of these periods is the period that began prior to the advent of Christ (the present evil age), and the second is the one introduced by Christ (the new creation). According to Paul, these two contrasting periods are distinguished from one another by a radical change in the relationship human beings have to each of these elements. Martyn explains how these two ages are dynamically interrelated, assuring his readers that Paul is not making a distinction here between the profane and the sacred - it is far more involved than that. What Paul is describing here is that anti-God powers have attempted to rule the world, bringing human beings into slavery, something which was never intended by God and would not be tolerated by Him indefinitely. As a result, God bought about a revolution that changed the world forever. Commenting on this Belcher states,

According to Martyn, Paul sees the world already brought to its end in the person of Jesus Christ, and “apocalypse” is the most viable way to express the cosmic revolution that Christ has instigated.

21 Martyn, 98.
22 Ibid.
A further contribution that distinguishes Martyn’s perspective from others regarding the nature of the apocalyptic, is his reconnecting the subject to New Testament theology. As a result, a total theological vision of God, sin, humanity, history, and redemption emerges, becoming part of this new age - one that is triumphant through and through. The emphasis of his book is on God’s gracious act of intervention on behalf of the afflicted, to revolutionise their circumstances.\(^{24}\)

Continuing to bring examples to this concept Martyn also describes two different tracks of Jewish apocalyptic theology. Drawing from the work of de Boer, Martyn defines these as the following.

1. Cosmological: referring to evil, anti-God powers that have managed to commence their own rule over the world, leading human beings into idolatry and thus into slavery. In His own time God will inaugurate a victorious and liberating apocalyptic war against these evil powers, delivering His elect from their grasp and thus making right that which has gone wrong because of the powers’ malignant machinations.\(^{25}\)

2. Forensic: things have gone wrong because human beings have willfully rejected God, thereby bringing about death, corruption and perversion of the world. Given this self-caused plight, God has graciously provided the cursing and blessing Law as the remedy, thus placing before human beings what he describes as “The Two Ways” - the Way of death and the Way of life.\(^{26}\)

\(^{24}\) Ibid, 38.

\(^{25}\) Ibid, 97-98.

\(^{26}\) Ibid, 98, footnote.
Human beings are individually accountable before the bar of the Judge. But, by one’s own decision, one can repent of one’s sins, receive nomistic forgiveness, and be assured of eternal life. For at the last judgment that which deserved a sentence of death will be reversed for those who choose the path of Law observance. For those who do not make this choice, that sentence or judgment will be permanently confirmed.\(^{27}\) A crucial issue is that of determining which of these two “tracks” is dominant in a given source. In the course of Martyn’s commentary, we will see that, whereas forensic apocalyptic eschatology is characteristic of the Teachers’ theology,\(^{28}\) Paul’s Galatian letter is fundamentally marked by the cosmological apocalyptic eschatology.

In order to rectify this upheaval of God’s intended plan for creation, Martyn claims that God has inaugurated a victorious and liberating apocalyptic war against the evil powers, delivering His elect from their grasp and making right that which has gone wrong. He argues that this was achieved as a result of the Incarnation, death and resurrection (more often referred to by Martyn as invasion) of Christ. Here he focusses on “invasion” as opposed to ongoing warfare.\(^{29}\)

The various ways in which Paul speaks of Christ’s death and resurrection shows that for him the motif of cosmic warfare is focused first of all on the cross, and it

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
\(^{28}\) A name Martyn gives to those who had produced a doctrine contrary to Paul’s teaching, that had taken hold amongst the Galatians.
\(^{29}\) Ibid, 99.
is from the cross that one perceives the contours of that warfare. There, in the thoroughly real event of Christ’s crucifixion, God’s war of liberation was commenced and decisively settled, making the cross the foundation of Paul’s apocalyptic theology. Martyn posits that, according to Paul, Jesus’ death was the powerful deed in God’s apocalyptic war, the deed by which God has already freed us from the malevolent grasp of the present age. Here he places much emphasis on Paul’s use of the noun *apokalypsis* and the verb *apokalypto*, claiming that for Paul, the cosmos in which humanity had previously been living in, met its end in God’s apocalypse of Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14). It was here, Martyn claims, that the birth of Paul’s apocalyptic mission came about. Martyn continues this thread by stating that this is what Paul meant in his use of the Greek word *apokalypto* in Galatians 3:23. The word appears twenty-six times in the New Testament and is translated by all well-known translators as meaning “to reveal” or to “unveil.” Martyn challenges this translation, stating that it cannot mean “revealed” because it was not hidden (as something that is behind a curtain). He posits that it is actually an invasion, rather than a revealing, and that this invasion is God coming to earth in the form of Jesus Christ. Supporting this argument, Martyn states,

> The absence of what are sometimes called the grotesque characteristics of apocalyptic must not be allowed to mislead us in our reading of Galatians. The motif of an earthquake lies at the heart of this letter without being literally mentioned. For… the fundamental pairs of opposites one had assumed to be the primal and immutable elements of the whole of existence have been wiped from

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the face of the cosmos as though being carried away in a landslide… It follows
that all of the key terms by which Paul bears witness to God’s activity are redefined
at the juncture and on the basis of the juncture.”

He continues his argument by presenting the term ‘apocalyptic’ as a reference to a
theological pattern of thought, not to a literary genre, thus making an important and
possibly somewhat unique distinction between the two. He speaks of a “before”
which refers to a time when the followers of Christ, were confined or imprisoned;
and a time “after” which is the time of their deliverance. He then states that the
difference between the two was not a time of unveiling, but rather the invasion of
Christ and His Spirit, with a considerable emphasis placed on the experience of the
cross. What Martyn emphasises here is that “apocalypse” commonly refers to a
cataclysmic event so dramatic, powerful, and all-encompassing, that the entire
world comes to an end. It signifies a rupture of order, a destruction of the familiar,
and a halting of life, so that nothing remains the same. It is in this new order
where Martyn places the true church today. He states,

There and only there, are the churches living in the real world, for it is there
that the creation is being made what it now is by God’s liberating invasion…

Belcher makes this useful summary,

According to Martyn, Paul sees the world already brought to its end in the person
of Jesus Christ, and apocalypse is the most viable way to express the cosmic

31 Ibid, 104.
32 Ibid, 96 (footnotes).
33 Ibid, 99.
34 Jodi Belcher in Davis and Harink, Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 37.
revolution that Christ has instigated. He impresses upon us, as do other apocalyptic authors, that “we are suspended within the event of Jesus Christ” and that that is enough.  

From this summary of Martyn’s major use of “apocalyptic” we shall now make a more specific review of the key elements he presents that are relevant to the critique this dissertation is making.

**B. Overview of Martyn’s Commentary**

Martyn’s argument is that there are four key concepts that undergird Paul’s discourse in his letter to the church in Galatia. These are:

1. His own apostolate.
2. The human plight
3. Apocalyptic theology
4. The relationship between his word and the Word of God.

These four concepts are related directly to developments currently transpiring in the Galatian church and are fundamental to the rest of the letter. Martyn is saying that the letter was borne out of these concerns. A major focus in Martyn’s work is on the Apostle Paul as the author of the letter. Here Martyn presents him as writing to the Galatians after hearing that they have been somewhat led astray by

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36 Walter Lowe, *Why We Need Apocalyptic* (Published online by Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51-52.
38 Ibid.
a group of people that Martyn refers to as the “Teachers.” Some comments are necessary on both of these key “actors” on stage in Martyn’s work.

1. The Apostle Paul

Martyn’s attempts to reconstruct the background of how the Galatians would have received this letter by considering how they would have perceived Paul on his arrival; what the Teachers’ understood by the term “Apostle”; and how Paul portrayed this term in his letter. The Greek word *apostolos* means “one sent”. Paul is careful to point out to the Galatians that his mission is not one where he is representing any church (most likely referring to the church of Antioch), or any other human person or agency. It is important to him that he is recognised as being on a mission that has been assigned to him directly from the Lord. In this work and several other writings by him, Martyn speaks “the three-actor moral drama” by which he refers to,

1. The divine agent

2. The anti-God powers as agents

3. The human agent.  

According to Martyn, each of these must be considered in an adequate description of the human agency in Paul.

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39 See especially Martyn “Epilogue” and “Gospel Invades Philosophy.”
Paul’s identity resides in the fact that He has been sent and commissioned by God alone. He refers to God as his Father and desires to be received this way by the Galatians. He also goes to some lengths to establish that he has others working with him and that they represent a significant number and calibre of people. This is probably done to avoid the criticism by the teachers that he is working alone.\(^{40}\) In approaching the Galatians this way, Martyn posits that it is feasible to see this as an attempt to avoid certain types of criticism that Paul suspected may be levelled at him by the Teachers (described below).\(^{41}\) He wanted the Galatians to receive him as a person with a message sent from Christ Himself.\(^{42}\)

This reinforces how important that it is for Paul is that neither he nor his message should be measured by human norms because both the message and the messenger come from God, not from human beings.\(^{43}\) Paul wants the Galatians to hear his own words as the words of Christ. Martyn reinforces this view by stating that Jewish tradition clearly viewed someone “being sent” as meaning they would subordinate their own will to the will of the sender, meaning a particular church or individual. Paul refutes this. He states that he was not sent to the Galatians by any particular church, or individual. Both his message and the messenger (Paul himself)

\(^{40}\) Martyn, *Galatians*, 85.
\(^{41}\) Ibid, 93.
\(^{42}\) Ibid, 95.
\(^{43}\) Galatians 4:14.
come from God alone not from entities in this world.\textsuperscript{44} As an apostle called by God, Paul comes to his work from beyond, and, as a result Paul claims neither he nor his message can be measured by human norms.\textsuperscript{45} In Galatians 1:1, he introduces himself to the Galatians by saying,

Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Martyn reflects on this by assessing Paul as being a truly strange person who is sure that even before his birth God determined that he would carry the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.\textsuperscript{46} There were, Paul acknowledges, apostles before him, but he did not receive his call from them any more than he received it from the church in Antioch. Bearing the ultimate message from God to human beings, he is a man whose identity is determined by the God who sent him and by the message God gave him to preach. To other human beings… he is himself a stranger, a person who, in a profound sense, “comes from somewhere else.”\textsuperscript{47}

2. The Teachers

The group Martyn calls the “Teachers” are of vital importance to his work. He describes these Teachers as a group of Messianic Jews who are comfortable living amongst the Gentiles. They draw much of their understanding from the literature

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 94.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Ibid. Also see Notes on 1:11-12; Comment 9, and Martyn, Issues, 89-110.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Galatians 1:15.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 95. See 1 Corinthians 4:8-13; 2 Corinthians 11:21-29.
\end{itemize}
of Diaspora Judaism such as *Wisdom*, the writings of Philo and Josephus. They understand themselves to represent a powerful circle of Jews in the Jerusalem church - a group who are utterly zealous for the observance of The Law. They are a group of outsiders who have only recently come into the Galatian church. It seems that Paul knows some of their names and they are described as being Christian-Jewish evangelists who had been very persuasive in bringing a false doctrine to the Galatians. Their motivation is to produce a Law-observant mission to the Gentiles, with the possible motive of keeping on good terms with some powerful people and possibly also to fill the numbers of the descendants promised to Abraham. They see The Law as the source of the Spirit. To compete with Paul’s “theatric” vision of the crucifixion of Christ and the falling upon them of the Holy Spirit, the Teachers also proclaim manifestations of the Holy Spirit - coming as a result of them keeping The Law.

Paul is deeply disturbed with these Teachers. He characterises them as persons who frighten (disturb) the Galatians possibly with the threat of them losing their salvation. They proclaim the necessity of circumcision as the commencement of Law observance naming it as the act the takes Gentiles into being the people of The Law. They do claim that the Christ is the Christ of The Law but they view Christ in the light of God’s Law, rather than The Law in the light of Christ. They avoid

48 Ibid, 18.
49 Galatians 1:7; 5:10.
any suggestion that God’s Law and God’s Christ could be even partially in conflict with one another. The Spirit-dispensing Law will guide them in their daily life. They are prepared to receive Gentiles into the fold but for this to happen the Gentiles must follow the requirements of The Law, beginning with circumcision. The Teachers did not refer to themselves as apostles but they did claim to represent the apostles of the Jerusalem church. Their view of Paul was that he had begun with good standing but then began to preach a Law-less Gospel. At this point they deemed him to be a renegade, an unfaithful apostle, and thus one to whom that term “Apostle” does not apply. It was into this setting that Paul arrived.50

3. Martyn’s Key Theme - the Invasion

In Comment #2, entitled “The Human Plight and God’s Redemptive Act in Christ” Martyn introduces the key theme of his book - the apocalyptic invasion of the coming of Christ and the ongoing process that the new creation pivots upon.51 As an apostle, Martyn declares that Paul has definitely come to the Galatians “from beyond”, just like Christ invaded the cosmos from beyond. This is a startling analogy, but it is even more than that. Is Paul’s mission from beyond, like Christ’s mission, or is it actually part of Christ’s mission? Martyn suggests it is the latter.

50 Ibid, 247.
51 Ibid, 95-97.
What does this mean for the way Paul wants the Galatians to read his letter? According to Martyn, Paul wants the Galatians to hear his words as being synonymous to God speaking to them. As a result, he is maintaining that on hearing his words being read to them they are dealing with God, not him. The focus of this interpretation is based upon Galatians 1:4, which says,

> who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Martyn claims that the first half of this verse is a quotation from an early Christian liturgy and provides ample evidence for this assumption. But he goes on to caution his readers not to assume that just because Paul is using a liturgical style, he is not composing freely. Whatever one decides on this issue, the key point from Martyn here is his emphasis on the fact that the human plight is fundamentally one of enslavement to supra-human powers and God’s redemptive act is His deed of liberation. This liberation is the result of God’s invasion, particularly, but not limited to, the coming of Christ. It was from the event of Christ’s crucifixion, perceived to be God’s redeeming deed, that Paul came to know the true nature of the human plight. Martyn references Karl Barth and states the following,

> Karl Barth was right to emphasise that Paul saw Adam in the light of Christ, sin in the light of grace, and so on. See, for example, Church Dogmatics, 2.2: “… it is only by grace that the lack of grace can be recognized as such” (92); “… the doctrine of election… defines grace as the starting-point for all reflection and

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52 Ibid, 106.
53 Ibid, 97.
utterance…” (93). In recent decades Barth’s point has been emphasized in a
certain way by E. P. Sanders, Palestinian Judaism, 442-447. [Pace Thielman, From
Flight to Solution]. Just as Paul the Pharisee could say – knowing God’s law to be
God’s grace – that the knowledge of sin comes from The Law (Rom 3.20), so Paul
the apostle insists that whatever does not flow from faith is sin (Rom 14.23). 54

In citing Galatians 1:4(b), Martyn claims that Paul gives greater specificity to the
purpose for which Christ died - “so that he might snatch us out of the grasp of the
present evil age, thus acting in accordance with the intention of God our Father.” 55
In his statement in Galatians 1:4(a) which says, “who gave Himself for our sins,
that He might rescue us” Martyn concludes that Paul gives his own interpretation
of the Jewish-Christian atonement formula tailoring it to the Galatian situation.
Despite this, Martyn argues, Paul does not reject the Jewish-Christian formula. He
knows very well that individuals commit discrete transgressions that can be called
sins. The root antidote to an individual sin, however, is not an individual instance
of forgiveness. That antidote lies in the fact that, in vanquishing the enslaving
power of Sin (the present evil age), God has called the church into being as His
new creation, and part of its task as the new creation is to deal with discrete
instances of sin.

54 Ibid, 95.
55 Ibid, 96.
When, then, a member of the church makes a misstep, he is to be brought back into the company of God’s new creation, for it is in that newly created company that a sin is not only forgiven but is also fundamentally overpowered by God’s mighty victory over all sin. In this, Martyn argues, Paul is proclaiming that God, in Christ, has acted to liberate human beings from enslaving forces, and that Paul has gone to some lengths to demonstrate the difference between forgiveness of particular sins and liberation from sin as a power. This is why, for Martyn, Galatians 1:4a has to be a quotation: its theology is going in a different direction from Paul’s theology. Martyn's Paul thinks of sin fundamentally as a power, as the enslavement of the cosmos, and of God’s work as a work of liberation, whereas in verse 4a sin is construed as particular sins and God’s work as a work fundamentally of forgiveness. According to Martyn, Paul doesn’t completely reject this, but rather modifies it in verse 4b, which says, “from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,” so that it reflects his own theological view. Forgiveness of individual sins can happen within the Christian community that God has liberated from the “enslavement of supra-human powers” that characterises the “human plight.” All sins are a threat but the assurance is that sin is not only forgiven but that it has been overpowered by God’s mighty victory over it. It’s important for Martyn that we understand and get this order right. “God’s redemptive act” is not the forgiveness of this sin or that sin, but “his deed of

56 Ibid, 97.
57 Ibid.
liberation,” meaning that He moves His faithful out of the old age, into the new age.

Some further comments on “invasion” will be helpful here, particularly in describing how Martyn sees that the invasion he talks about is apocalyptic. So far, we have seen that “invasion”, as Martyn describes it, speaks of a truly crucified cosmos and a genuinely new creation. Commenting on Galatians 6.15, Martyn writes:

Having repeatedly stated that the subject of his letter is the invasive route God has elected in order to make right what has gone wrong, Paul caps his argument by addressing that subject yet again. What do things look like when, having entered the present evil age in Christ, God has begun to set things right? To give the climactic answer to this question, our radical apocalyptic theologian does not refer to an improvement in the human situation. In an unbridled way, Paul speaks rather of nothing less than the dawn of the new creation. As described above, Martyn cites the phrase “present evil age” used by Paul in Galatians 1:4b as the first mention of the many apocalyptic expressions that are found in the letter. In His response to this evil age, God has inaugurated a victorious and liberating apocalyptic war against these evil powers, delivering His elect from their grasp and making right that which has gone wrong. Obviously, this

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid, 97.
was achieved as a result of the Incarnation, death and resurrection (invasion) of Christ.\(^{61}\) His focus here is on “invasion” not ongoing warfare.

The various ways in which Paul speaks of Christ’s death (and resurrection) in Galatians 1:1, show that for him the motif of cosmic warfare is focused first of all on the cross, and it is from the cross that one perceives the contours of that warfare. There, in the thoroughly real event of Christ’s crucifixion, God’s war of liberation was commenced and decisively settled, making the cross the foundation of Paul’s apocalyptic theology. Two facets of this foundation are particularly important and are worthy of further clarification.

1. Paul’s use of apocalyptic language in connection with the death of Jesus clearly means that the turn of the ages is no longer thought of solely as an event in the future. Employing his own form of enthusiastic language, Paul speaks of a deliverance that has already been accomplished.

2. Jesus’ death was a vicarious act “for our sins”, as the Teachers are very likely affirming, and as the Galatians certainly know already.

Paul is concerned to offer an interpretation of Jesus’ death that is oriented not toward personal guilt and forgiveness, but rather toward corporate enslavement and liberation. Jesus’ death was the powerful deed in God’s apocalyptic war, the deed

\(^{61}\) Ibid, 98 (footnotes).
by which God has already freed us from the malevolent grasp of the present age. This is one of the major things that Galatians are not currently hearing from the Teachers. It is one of the major things Paul thinks they sorely need to hear. This certain hope, Martyn claims, that has been grounded in God’s invasive action in the advent of Christ, is the apocalyptic good news Paul calls “the gospel”. The fact that it is “being apocalyptic” is underlined by the fact that it is not visible, demonstrable, or provable in the categories and with the means of perception native to “everyday” existence - native, that is to say, to existence determined solely by the present evil age. He calls the in-break of the new creation itself to be apocalyptic revelation. The dawn of this new creation, causing the death of the old enslaving cosmos, brings about an epistemological crisis. One who knows himself to be grasped by it cannot continue to perceive and to know in the old way. On the contrary, he now sees bifocally; meaning, as previously discussed, to see both the evil age and the new creation simultaneously. This bifocal simultaneous vision is distinctly unbalanced however, in that, just as God’s power is “much more” than the power of sin, so God causes the apocalyptic seer to see the powers of the new creation “much more” than he sees those of the Old Age.\(^62\) It is this bifocal vision that enables Paul to make confident statements about the future of the Galatian churches.\(^63\)

\(^{62}\) Romans 5: 12-21.
\(^{63}\) Ibid, 104 & Galatians 5:10.
Along with describing the coming of Christ as “the cosmic apocalyptic event,”\textsuperscript{64} Martyn also describes it as a disruptive event. He shares with Käsemann, a deep suspicion of salvation-history, which he expresses strongly, stating that such an interest was held by Paul’s opponents (the Teachers).\textsuperscript{65} He will not accept any remedy of the human situation to be possible unless God makes the first move. Commenting on this Martyn states, 

Since humans are fundamentally slaves, the drama in which wrong is set right does not begin with action on their part. It begins with God’s militant action against all the powers that hold human beings in bondage. Thus, that action of God, instead of consisting at its centre of a call for the slave to repent and seek forgiveness, proves to be the deed by which God frees human beings.\textsuperscript{66}

In taking this stance Martyn allows no room for any transformation of society, both present and future.\textsuperscript{67} He sees God as ultimately putting an end to the present order of reality (“this age”) and replacing it with a new, transformed order of reality (“the age to come”).\textsuperscript{68} He aligns himself with the comment that Weiss wrote regarding Jesus and the Kingdom of God which is as follows, 

By force and insurrection men might establish a Davidic monarch… but God will establish the Kingdom of God without human hands, horse or rider, with only his angels and celestial powers”; “God himself must come and make everything new”

\textsuperscript{64} Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies,” in \textit{Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul} (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 111-23.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} A point this dissertation takes considerable issue with.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, 50.
"The actualization of the Kingdom of God is not a matter for human initiative, but entirely a matter of God’s initiative." 69

This is a key point that will be picked up later in this dissertation. I will emphasise the differing views I have with Martyn over much of the above, especially in regard to the topic of the Kingdom of God.

4. The Dawn of a New Creation

The advent of the Son and of His Spirit is thus the cosmic, apocalyptic event. There was a “before” and there is now an “after.” 70 In the “after” God has called the church into being as His new creation which is embodied in Christ, and is the new Israel of God. Part of the task of this new creation, is to deal with discrete instances of sin. Here we see that the major focus for Paul is the fact that those in Christ are a whole new people and this introduces a whole new aspect of warfare. The Spirit and the Flesh are actively at war with one another. The territory where human beings now live is a newly invaded space, and that means that its structure cannot remain unchanged. 71

This new age is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ; 72 the time of things being set right by that faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit; and the

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70 Ibid, 572.
71 Ibid, 573.
time of the war of liberation commenced by the Spirit. In a word it is the time of the dawn of the new creation with its new antinomies. It is a holistic vision, cosmic in scope and emphatically apocalyptic.\textsuperscript{73} Just as it is in the cross of Christ that God has accomplished the new creation, so there is a significant sense in which Christ is the new creation. This means that His church, by being baptised into Christ, putting Him on as though He were their clothes; by having His Spirit in their hearts; by having Him determine the form of their communal life and by belonging utterly to Him,\textsuperscript{74} that the Galatians (as with all the members of God’s church), are Abraham’s corporate seed and God’s new creation in Christ.\textsuperscript{75} Thus, it is a people that God is calling to existence in Christ, rather than The Law. God’s new creation is not a romantic haven in which the individual can hug himself to sleep. It is embodied in those who, re-created by Christ’s love, serve one another in the new community of mutual concern - God’s Israel.\textsuperscript{76}

5. The Issue of Grace

As already seen, Martyn has highlighted the issue of grace and claims the Galatians would have noted this from Paul’s sermons. The emphasis Paul provides is on the fact that God has used His amazing grace to bring His people into the space of the new creation in which He is making things right.\textsuperscript{77} Paul emphasises that no works

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Galatians 3:27; 4:6, 4:19.
\textsuperscript{75} Galatians 3:29.
\textsuperscript{76} Weiss, Jesus’ Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, 574. See also Galatians 5:13 & Romans 5:2.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, 87.
can be sufficient to achieve or earn this grace and that the Teachers were wrong in accepting Christ’s act of grace and then calling His followers to Law observance requirements. Paul is adamant - the death of the Son is a sacrifice enacted both by Him and by God; and as such it breaks the mould of the old sacrificial system by “snatching out of the grasp of the present age.”

78 The words “snatch out” literally mean “to buy out of enslavement to”, referring to the fact that God has acted to liberate human beings from enslaving forces e.g. Galatians 5:1. For Paul the age that humanity had been previously living in, met its end in God’s apocalypse by the invasion of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit,

80 through a sacrificial atonement by which God broke the power of sin from a believer’s life.

This doctrine is a major ongoing debate or challenge that Paul has for the Teachers throughout the letter to the Galatians\textsuperscript{81} and this plays a major role in Martyn’s book. After building a case that Paul’s letter to the Galatians witnesses to the apostles’ basic conviction that the gospel is not about human movement into blessedness, it is about God’s liberating invasion of the cosmos, Martyn proceeds to articulate more fully the shape of that “invasion” which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, 96.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Galatians 6:14.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid, 99.
6. Warfare

Martyn argues that the nature of the warfare that is now a part of this life, is unique - something that “has been commenced, not by the evil powers of the present age (meaning it would be historical), but rather by the redemptive powers of the new creation.”\textsuperscript{82} It could not possibly be historical in Martyn’s analysis because it is characterised by a line of movement from the new creation into the present evil age. It is a new action - one that he describes as “God’s forces on the march.” The New Testament revelation that there is now a whole new battle on the human front between the flesh and the spirit is described by Martyn as two new opposites coming into being (flesh and spirit) which could not have happened earlier because it was born through God’s new creative act of sending His Son and the Holy Spirit to the world.\textsuperscript{83}

Martyn goes on to argue that this is not about a choice between the Spirit and the Flesh, as though they were two different paths that both lay equally before the Galatians. The Galatians are already incorporated into a war against the Flesh that has nothing to do with personal choice. On the contrary, the Galatians are exhorted to be led by the Spirit which ensures that they won’t fall victim to the Spirit’s enemy - the Impulsive Desire of the Flesh.\textsuperscript{84} This warfare, as the Apostle Paul reveals, is clearly a struggle that all those of the new creation must participate in.

\textsuperscript{82} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 100.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
Paul also makes it clear that the powers of darkness are behind it and it is constantly fueled by spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.\textsuperscript{85}

Martyn’s argument here is useful by stating that this is not futuristic - rather it takes place in this present age. He describes the battle as two opposed powers that became at war with one another on the cross, where the powers of darkness were soundly defeated, freeing the followers of Christ from the malevolent grasp of the present age.\textsuperscript{86} As a result of this perspective, Martyn describes the cross as the foundation of Paul’s apocalyptic theology, reinforcing his apocalyptic argument by describing this warfare as an “apocalyptic antinomy” in the sense that has been formed by the advent of Christ and the Holy Spirit. As a guide for the Galatians Paul gives four steps to provide them to observe in their daily life of their communities, which are outlined in Galatians 5.

1. He issues a promise explicitly focused on the Spirit, rather than on The Law (V16).

2. Referring to one of the presuppositions of that promise, he speaks of the Spirit and the Flesh as two combatants engaged in a war with one another (V17).

3. This war is the determinative context for the Galatians’ daily life - being the scene of the Spirit’s victory and thus of the Galatians’ real life (5:25)

\textsuperscript{85} Ephesians 6:12.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
4. Centrally concerned with the Spirit’s apocalyptic war against the Flesh, Paul employs the language of exhortation in the promise itself (V16).\textsuperscript{87}

Martyn’s Paul agrees with the Teachers statement that the impulsive desire of the flesh exists and this is a major reason why there is an important need to provide the Galatians with daily guidance for daily life.\textsuperscript{88} The Spirit creates a new community based on love, joy, peace etc.\textsuperscript{89} Both the Spirit and the Flesh do things not only in, but also to the Galatians. Paul is convinced that the Flesh cannot be defeated by human action. He states how the Spirit and the Flesh are warriors who are at war with one another and the Galatians are central to this war.\textsuperscript{90} God inaugurated this war by sending His Son invasively into the human orb i.e. the territory of the Flesh. This Divine invasion has not happened peacefully - on the contrary it has provoked a genuine conflict - an apocalyptic war as described above.

This war is the new-creational struggle, the apocalyptic war of the end-time, the war when God’s forces are on the march. However, the Spirit’s weapons are strange indeed. For example, the Spirit bears the fruit of communal peace in order to overcome the violence engendered by the Flesh.\textsuperscript{91} The Galatians have an active role in the war that was given to them at their baptism. They are now serving the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[87] Ibid, 525.
\item[88] Ibid, 528.
\item[89] See Galatians 5:22.
\item[90] Ibid, 526.
\item[91] Ibid, 530-1. See also Galatians 5:15, 22, 6:10-20.
\end{footnotes}
Spirit’s army, fully equipped and nourished for that service by the Spirit Himself. The list in Galatians 5:22-23 are not actions to be practiced - they are fruits of the Spirit meaning they are given, not perfected through discipline. Both the actions of the Flesh and the Spirit are communal in nature. The attributes of the Flesh destroy community while the attributes of the Spirit build and support community.  

The Galatians are led into certain acts by one belligerent power or the other. Because God continues to supply the Spirit to the Galatians, the Spirit itself remains active in their corporate life, continuing to cry out to God through their own mouths, and continuing to bear the fruit of love in the corporate life of their communities. Through the invasive Spirit then, God has created and continues to create the Galatian churches as addressable communities - communities that are able to hear God’s imperatives because of the indwelling Spirit.

7. The Church, the World and Bifocal Vision

Martyn argues that the role of the church in overcoming the world, is only possible by God’s liberating invasion through the advent. This statement makes it clear that Martyn accepts that the world is being liberated only as the result of Christ’s invasion. Although there is certainly a major turn-around at this point, Martyn seems to overlook the fact that this truth also reveals that the Kingdom of God,

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92 Ibid, 535.
93 Galatians 3:5.
94 Galatians 5:22.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid, 102.
which was inaugurated at the first coming of Christ, is moving forward, aided by
the work of the faithful (the church) and the ongoing process or work of the Holy
Spirit.\textsuperscript{97} This does not belong exclusively to the invasive realm. It began that way
but it must be continued as Christ urged in giving the mandate of what is called the
Great Commission\textsuperscript{98} and empowering this through the coming of the Holy Spirit
(Acts 2).

In focusing on the battle the Apostle Paul himself had through facing all sorts of
hardships and even despairing of life at times, Martyn argues that Paul’s hope and
steadfast focus on the ultimate victory we have in Christ, always wins the day for
him.\textsuperscript{99} Here again Martyn moves into an interesting interpretation of what he calls
“apocalyptic freedom” also using the term “bifocal” (an important term for Martyn)
in describing Paul’s vision of the now and the future from this point. Looking at
Galatians 5:5-6 Martyn claims that three messages are combined: “God has done
it!” and “You are to live it out!” and “You are to live it out because God has done
it and because God will do it!” These three points make up Martyn’s bifocal vision
of apocalyptic.\textsuperscript{100} He claims that this bifocal vision has given Paul the ability to see
simultaneously the continuing virus in Galatia and the antidote to that virus which
was provided by God. And it has shown him which of these is the stronger – the

\textsuperscript{97} Here again is the argument this dissertation will pursue.
\textsuperscript{98} Matthew 28:18-20.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, 103.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
spirit can now overcome the flesh do away with any reliance upon the requirements of The Law. According to Martyn it is with realistic confidence that Paul can speak of freedom in the present: “It was to bring us into the realm of freedom that Christ set us free”\textsuperscript{101} To Martyn this freedom is apocalyptic freedom.\textsuperscript{102}

One finds the marks of Paul’s bifocal vision in his assertion that the church is free because it is realistically descended from the free woman who is in heaven, the heavenly Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{103} It is in this same bifocal vision that Paul sees that the future, no less than the present, belongs to God’s Christ,\textsuperscript{104} the future deed of God being as much the parent of Paul’s apostolic confidence as is God’s past deed. What binds all of these variegated pictures together is the victorious march of God’s gospel into the world. For that victorious march is described by Martyn (although not really defined), as the “sure expansion of the beachhead that God has already won in Christ.”\textsuperscript{105} In order to look further at what Martyn means by “bifocal vision” it will be helpful to consider the work on this by Jodi Belcher who has researched it from a number of Martyn’s writings. She explains that the world for folk like Martyn and others who embrace the same concept, is not an arena of harmonious

\textsuperscript{101} Galatians 5:1.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Galatians 4:26.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 467. See also Galatians 5:5, 10.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, 103.
order or neutral territory, but the site of struggle between different powers, in which injustice, oppression, and destruction seem to reign.\textsuperscript{106}

Martyn’s “bifocal” view is that those who are in Christ are afforded two pictures of the world (one fallen, and one new in Christ), which make up two different realities. As a result, they can discern their place within the struggle and engage with others in the fight for a new world.\textsuperscript{107} Taking this further, Martyn concludes that for those in Christ, on this earth, there is little that can be done, outside of the invasion of God, because these powers can act outside of God and maintain a stronghold over the cosmos.\textsuperscript{108} I will return to dispute this concept later in this dissertation.

\section*{8. Antinomy}

Martyn widely uses the concept of “antinomy” in his work. By this he is referring to a pair of opposites discovered by human beings to be so fundamental to the cosmos as to constitute one of its elements. In using this concept Paul is saying that the antinomies such as Jew/Gentile; circumcision/uncircumcision; The Law/the Not-Law, are now gone with the advent of Christ. The cosmos that was founded

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{106} Jodi Belcher, in Davis and Harink, \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 246.  \\
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.  \\
\end{flushleft}
upon religious pairs of opposites no longer exists as is made clear in Galatians 3:27-28\textsuperscript{109}, which states,

\begin{quote}
For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
\end{quote}

For those in Christ there is no longer Jew nor Greek; slave nor free; male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus.\textsuperscript{110} This results in a new set of antimonies being introduced.

1. Spirit and Flesh.

2. Death of Christ verse The Law.

With the introduction of these antinomies, Paul sets a tone that is fundamental to his gospel, and runs throughout the whole of the letter.

9. What Time Is It?

As discussed briefly above, Martyn refers to the in-breaking of the new creation as itself being revelation and apocalypse and that it reveals (bifocal) to the one who has been born again, both the evil age and the new creation simultaneously. But one to whom this has been revealed, sees the powers of the new creation much more than he or she sees the old.\textsuperscript{111} “What time is it?” becomes a key question of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[109] Ibid.
\item[110] Ibid, 570.
\item[111] Ibid, 104.
\end{footnotes}
Martyn’s. “Yes” he states, “discerning time lies at the heart of the apocalyptic.”112 Answering his own question, on what time it is, Martyn states that, at Paul’s present time it is revealed that the invading Spirit has decisively commenced the war of liberation from the powers of the present evil age.

Martyn gives a much wider view to the use of *apokalypsis* and *apokalypto* here. He claims they both represent Christ’s coming; Christ’s past event (His death and resurrection) and the present war against the powers of evil, inaugurated by His Spirit and taking place between these two events.113 He makes useful comments linking Christ’s ultimate victory as to something that has already come in the form of the Incarnation and Cross. He states that this event has already changed the world, commencing God’s war of liberation in a way that can be celebrated in enthusiastic terms, without forgetting the future of Christ.114 Galatians 4:4 says “when the fulness of time came, God sent his Son.” Martyn argues that this creates a radically new perception of time.115 All the preceding motifs flow together in the question Paul causes to be the crucial issue of the entire letter: What time is it? His answer is that it is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ, the time of God’s making things right by Christ’s faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit of Christ, and thus the time in which the invading Spirit has decisively commenced

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112 Ibid.
113 Ibid, 105.
114 Galatians 5:5.
the war of liberation from the powers of the present evil age.\textsuperscript{116} He goes further by explaining that this is Paul’s apocalyptic perspective and is richer than one would think simply on the basis of 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and Romans. As a result, Martyn puts forward three foci.

1. Christ’s future coming.
2. Christ’s past advent (his death and resurrection).
3. The present war against the powers of evil, inaugurated by his Spirit and taking place between these two events.\textsuperscript{117}

If Paul is sure that Christ’s Parousia will bring the final victory of God over all his enemies,\textsuperscript{118} he is no less sure that Christ’s advent has commenced the war that will lead to that victory. Therefore, in an anticipatory but altogether real sense, Christ’s advent is that victory, even if its victorious character can be seen only in the bifocal vision of apocalyptic. Christ’s advent has already changed the world, commencing God’s war of liberation in a way that can be celebrated in “enthusiastic” terms, without forgetting the future of Christ.\textsuperscript{119} This leads Martyn to the conclusion that both God’s sending of Christ to suffer death on behalf of humanity (the cross) and Christ’s future coming (the Parousia) are invasive acts of God. And the fact of their being invasive acts – into a space that has temporarily fallen out of God’s hands –

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 104.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid, 105.
\item \textsuperscript{118} 1 Corinthians 15.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Galatians 5.5.
\end{itemize}
points to the liberating war that is crucial to Paul’s apocalyptic theology. It is this apocalyptic vision that has given Paul his perception of the nature of the human plight. God has invaded the world in order to bring it under his liberating control. From that deed of God, a conclusion is to be drawn, and the conclusion is decidedly apocalyptic. God would not have to carry out an invasion in order merely to forgive erring human beings. The root trouble lies deeper than human guilt, and it is more sinister. The whole of humanity – indeed, the whole of creation\textsuperscript{120} – is, in fact, enslaved under the power of the present evil age. That is the background of Martyn’s view of God’s invasive action in His sending of Christ, in His declaration of war, and in His striking the decisive and liberating blow against the power of the present evil age.\textsuperscript{121}

10. Glad Tidings

Martyn informs us that the plural noun “glad tidings” was used fairly frequently in times past when reporting a military victory and was also used to refer to salvation or release from oppression. It could also refer to the coming of a Saviour to begin such a phase.\textsuperscript{122} Paul used this term when announcing the coming of the Messiah, the crucifixion, the advent of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of future deliverance. This point would not be lost on the Galatians.\textsuperscript{123} However, other

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{120} Galatians 3:22. \\
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 105. \\
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 128. \\
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 129.
\end{flushright}
Pauline uses of this term would be both utterly new and strange to the Galatians as Paul claimed his use of the term far exceeded the way the Galatians had heard it used before.\textsuperscript{124} His proclamation is claiming that these glad tidings are unique and will never be repeated. It is a new history, terminating the old history and is the once-for-all good news that breaks the mould of all other good news.\textsuperscript{125} Its glad tidings announce that Christ has invaded and continues to invade the Galatians hearts, happening with power in the common life of their churches again and again.\textsuperscript{126}

In debating Martyn, one could argue that Christ only invades a person’s heart once and the ongoing miraculous work of transformation and the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit is now an ongoing life filled work and presence, an intentional part of the Kingdom of God. It could be argued that Paul supports this in Romans 6 where he talks about a believer being baptised into Christ’s (once only) death; raised into the likeness of His resurrection and as a result, walking into this newness of life.\textsuperscript{127} Although this is clearly impossible without first experiencing an “invasion” of the Holy Spirit,\textsuperscript{128} it then requires an ongoing process of transformation as Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 3:18 where he says that,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 130.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Galatians 3:2, 5, 4:6.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Romans 6:3, 6, 11 & 19.
\item \textsuperscript{128} John 3:5.
\end{itemize}
we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

This process of course, is not a matter of us getting more of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it’s a matter of the Holy Spirit getting more of us. Martyn wrestles with this very process as he states that there is no evidence that these glad tidings having come about. There is still no peace or military victory, no return to economic prosperity, in fact it seems that the world is totally unchanged. He claims this mystery is solved by Paul with the evidence he gives regarding the advent of the Spirit of God’s Son; the Spirit’s power over the flesh; the Spirit’s fruit; its power to create the loving community of the end-time and the New Creation bursting forth as the New Age community that they could all belong to. All these things, according to Paul, not only change the cosmos but also one’s way of perceiving it.

11. The Jerusalem Conference

The Jerusalem Conference (best described in Acts 15), was a crucial event in the development of the New Covenant. Various happenings and disputes resulted in a formal conference involving the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch. The conference was attended by James, Peter and John as the leaders and representatives of the Jerusalem church; Paul and it is assumed Barnabas

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130 Ibid, 132.
131 Ibid, 208.
representing the church in Antioch. One of the main topics of discussion is the foundational teaching Paul and Barnabas are seeking to build the Galatian church upon. Martyn describes the debate as being based upon the question of whether there was any further requirement of circumcision for Gentile believers (something that Paul vigorously opposed) and what, if any, requirements of The Law should be imposed upon Gentile converts. The main outcome of the conference was an agreement that the Antioch church should pursue its circumcision-free mission to the Gentiles. Paul sees this as an endorsement that his ministry is divinely inspired because that was entirely what he was advocating. As a result of this outcome, Martyn makes an assessment that for Paul, the history of the gospel is the story of the repeated presence of God as He causes the gospel to progress victoriously into the world of enslavement. He goes on to claim that this was an episode in which the truth of the advancing gospel was preserved for the Galatians. He (Martyn) sees this as God’s ever-new activity.

12. The Battle Against The Law

Another feature of some emphasis in Martyn’s book is the battle he perceives between Paul and the Teachers around the place of The Law in relation to the coming of Christ and the introduction of the New Age. He cites Galatians 2:16 as

132 Ibid, 208.
134 Ibid.
being one of the most tightly concentrated theological statements in all of Paul’s letters. It reads,

[N]evertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of The Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of The Law; since by the works of The Law no flesh will be justified.

Martyn argues that Paul is not claiming that God’s justification removes one from the realm of God’s Law. Instead, according to Paul, rectification (a term Martyn prefers to use in place of justification) is an act of God and through that act, God set right the things that have gone wrong. What has made things wrong is transgressions against God’s covenant committed among God’s people and this is only made right by God’s forgiveness, accomplished by Christ’s death. This means that God’s rectification is an act of God’s mercy.\(^{135}\) The reason The Law is not mentioned is because its continuing validity is taken for granted. God has accomplished his rectifying forgiveness in Christ, specifically in Christ’s death and resurrection and it is through these formulas that one then finds God’s messianic grace in the context of God’s Law. As a result, God’s rectifying forgiveness in Christ is confessed without explicit reference to faith.\(^{136}\) According to Martyn both Paul and the Jewish believers would have accepted the above with little argument.

\(^{135}\) Ibid, 269.

\(^{136}\) Ibid.
Paul’s grievance with the Teachers was that they were attempting to bring the Gentile believers into a Jewish community and therefore wanted a method of rectification that incorporated an observance of The Law. In stark contrast to them, Paul perceives every day that in His Gentile mission field God, in creating churches, is actively beginning to make things right in the whole of the world - apart from observance of The Law. Paul notes that the human being is not justified by The Law but rather by *pistis Christou Iesou* (the faith of Christ). Paul uses this expression to speak of Christ’s atoning faithfulness as, on the cross, He dies faithfully for human beings while looking faithfully to God. God has set things right without laying down a prior condition of any sort.\footnote{Ibid.} Martyn presents Paul’s argument as stating that Christ has the power to make things right - The Law does not. Paul argues that although The Law has the power to curse, it pronounces its curse on the crucified Christ.\footnote{Galatians 3:10, 13.} Sin functions as the prison warden over the whole of creation as the element(s) of the cosmos that enslave both Jew and Gentile.\footnote{Ibid, 272. Scriptures used here are Galatians 3:22 & 4:3.}

Putting all of this together Paul is summarising what has gone wrong and what is involved in God’s making it right in the whole of the cosmos. The cosmic landscape has now become a battlefield and human beings need deliverance from malignant powers that hold them in bondage. In response God has had to make things right by entering into combat against The Law.\footnote{Ibid, 275.} Here, according to
Martyn, is clear evidence that Paul sees in Christ’s death God’s liberating invasion of the territory of tyranny. This synopsis by Martyn clearly articulates the battle between Paul and the Teachers and also provides a description of what has been achieved by Christ’s work on the cross - both to the appeasement of God, in regard to sin, and to the liberation of humanity in Christ.

13. The Issue of Covenant

Covenant also is important to Martyn, something that he brings an important perspective to. In fact, he argues that Paul’s disagreement with the Teachers on this very topic is the major reason for Paul’s writing the letter. As Martyn sees it, the Teachers hold to the traditional Jewish marriage of covenant and Law, tracing this back to Abraham. They also identify Abraham as the primary parent of the holy seed. The expression “seed of Abraham” is important to the Teachers because it refers to the redemptive historical line that began with Abraham and extended through the generations of corporate Israel. They accept that, through Christ, the Gentiles now have the opportunity of transferring from their present existence into the line of the Abrahamic Covenant. The view is that God has now placed the Two Ways before the Gentiles, offering them the Way of Life as the alternative to the Way of Death. Of course, the teachers claimed this requires circumcision.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 343.
But Paul, by referring to *diatheke* and *sperma*, reveals a different picture. *Diatheke* refers consistently to a person’s last will which the Galatians would have been familiar with. However, it can also carry a quite different meaning - i.e. the amazing focus of the covenant made by God in Christ. Paul returns *diatheke* to its secular meaning, in order to disassociate it from The Law of Sinai and then, after declaring a divorce between God’s covenant and The Law, he attaches the covenant exclusively to the promise that God made to Abraham. In so doing he uses the illustration of Galatians 3:15 to show how God’s covenantal promise differs from The Law. He makes it clear that “the seed” is Christ so the Teachers cannot claim the seed is the Gentile transference into the already-existent, covenantal people of God i.e. the Jews. Paul’s views here of The Law’s impotence to make us alive is without parallel in Jewish thought. There is nothing like it in ancient Hebraic thought, in Judaism and in Christian Judaism.\(^\text{142}\) Martyn argues that Paul is strongly claiming that God is the governing factor in all these things. For example, he says that the blessing of God has “come to the Gentiles” not that the Gentiles have been granted the possibility of “entering the blessed family of Abraham.” This reflects the power of God’s already-executed movement into the cosmos in the singular seed of Abraham - Christ.\(^\text{143}\) Paul’s argument is that the promise lay dormant until the advent of a single seed - Christ. The Law was added until the coming of the seed. During the period of The Law there was no seed. So, this becomes evidence that the Gospel is about the divine invasion of the cosmos, not about human

\(^{142}\) Ibid, 372.

\(^{143}\) Ibid.
blessedness (religion).\textsuperscript{144} God is now bringing about a new creation, His church.\textsuperscript{145} Before this humanity was enslaved under the curse of The Law.\textsuperscript{146} It is Christ who reveals the non-ethnic character of God’s promise both at its inception and its fulfilment.

Martyn’s ability to glean from Paul, the different role and place that covenant and Law hold, is invaluable. Here he further demonstrates his ability to articulate such complex truths in a manner that brings great clarity. This certainly requires a very different or much wider perspective of God’s intention for His whole created order, a point that Martyn does well to establish. However, Martyn omits again to make any mention of the fact that this must not only require a huge shift in a person’s way of life, but it also must flow down through the ages, as the fruit of the invasion that brought it about and its requirement to bring transformation to the whole created order. Indeed, in chapter forty of his book Martyn uses Adam and Eve as an illustration to say that this relationship based on the fact that it is not good for man to be alone, is now replaced in the New Covenant which is built upon new principles, and the answer to loneliness is not marriage but rather the new-creational community that God is calling into being in Christ, the church marked by mutual love, as it is led by the Spirit of Christ.\textsuperscript{147} By this Paul is explaining that

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, 349.  
\textsuperscript{145} Galatians 6:15.  
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, 350.  
\textsuperscript{147} Galatians 3:2; 5:6; 6:15.
the new community is created by those who are “in Christ” and as a result all other factors have no real significance. This is about Christ and the community of those incorporated into Him who lie beyond religious distinctions. It is a new unified life (in Christ) that requires a real death, as shown through baptism being a participation into Christ’s death. Cleverly Martyn takes this up into invasion by saying the motif of invasion must be death-dealing in order to be life-giving. He compares it to the invasion of Germany in 1944 and adds that the religious and ethnic differentiations and that which underlies them - The Law - are identified in effect as “the old things” that have now “passed away,” giving place to the New Creation.

What Martyn does not discuss is how this New Creation is to be established. Paul himself teaches on the importance of community and how it is something that must be built up until it attains to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the son of God, with the intention of coming into the fullness of Christ. He states that he himself, and those who come after him, must be about the work of building on the foundation that has already been laid. As the New Testament writings reveal, this will require a labour, of love, steadfastness, suffering and patience. Adding to this, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews states that although Christ has put all

148 Ibid, 382.
149 2 Corinthians 5:17.
150 Ephesians 4:12-13. The fact that there is some debate whether Paul was the author of the letter to the Ephesians is noted but beyond the realms of this dissertation.
151 1 Corinthians 3:10.
152 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Timothy 4:10; 2 Timothy 2:3.
things in subjection to the Father, we do not yet see all things subjected to Him.\textsuperscript{153} This is definitely consistent with what is referred to as the Great Commission,\textsuperscript{154} commanded by Christ and calling us to an ongoing work of service until the end of the age - admittedly made possible by His “invasion” including the coming and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

The above overview acknowledges that Martyn’s impressive work is thoroughly researched and ground breaking. But it should not be considered as being the all-encompassing truth that the Apostle Paul embraces. In fact, it leaves us with many unanswered questions such as:

1. Does this negate any form of the redemptive historical line, including such topics as progressive covenantalism?
2. How are things going to proceed on planet earth as a result of this invasion?
3. What is required specifically from the people of God, both as individuals and as the biblical community?
4. Do God’s people wait for a further invasion(s), or are they assigned tasks to bring the intentions of this invasion into the structure of this planet?
5. What role does the Kingdom of God play in all of this?

These questions will all be considered in this dissertation with my following attempt to give a sympathetic but critical reflection on Martyn’s thinking. By way

\textsuperscript{153} Hebrews 2:8.
\textsuperscript{154} Matthew 28:18-20.
of introduction I will first look specifically at some of the issues Martyn’s work brings into question and will then seek to provide a somewhat more comprehensive view than the one Martyn gives.
III Debating Martyn

1. Invasion or Historically Progressive?

The author of the Hebrews states that Jesus is uniquely the *apostolos*, the one who is sent into the world, in order that He might give Himself to the world for the sake of the world’s own transformation - the world’s own freedom from the powers. As a matter of such transformation, the in-breaking of God’s reign, (invasion for Martyn), is made real and available only as a way of life, a concrete practice, a mode of historic action, which must endeavour to bring about the world’s redemption. What this means is that action must be taken. Action according to the word of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit - based upon the resurrection power made available in Christ and commensurate with the ongoing momentum of the Kingdom of God. This action must be aligned with the nature and purposes of God as revealed in Christ which must include the history of the created order - often termed as biblical worldview.

Nathan Kerr states,

> By confessing that ‘Jesus is Lord’, Christians thereby confess that in Christ’s life, death and resurrection we are confronted not only with the definitive disclosure of God in history but also by the fact that, as such, Jesus of Nazareth in his very historicity is the one in whom we are to discern the locus of the meaning, or ‘truth’,

155 Hebrews 3.
157 Ibid.
of history. Only as we refuse to grant history a status or meaning apart from the interruptive event of Christ’s cross and resurrection, and only as this event itself perpetually conditions history as the site of the apocalyptic arrival and inauguration of God’s coming reign, can the confession that ‘Jesus is Lord’ be considered true for us today.¹⁵⁸

This is where Martyn is the least helpful and where his thinking should be considered as being too narrow.

Robert Jensen, on considering Martyn’s works, asks if this means that rabbinic Judaism (meaning the Old Testament Law) is now nothing but the community of those Jews who reject Jesus as the Christ, and if circumcision now counts for nothing at all in the eyes of God?¹⁵⁹ He contends that these questions are left unanswered by Martyn. He brings this argument into the realm this dissertation is mostly concerned with when he states,

But what if the old history-of-salvation theology merely had it the wrong way around? What if the narrative told by Scripture, from Genesis 1 to the end of Revelation, were itself the embracing historical reality, with which secular constructs, like the Darwinian tale or the standard narrative of the Enlightenment or what the experts tell us about Cyrus, have to find their places and to which they must accommodate themselves, if they are to claim a grip on truth? What if Truth itself obligated the church’s thinking to take this at once countercultural and hegemonic position?¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Davis and Harink, Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 155.
¹⁶⁰ Ibid.
Indeed. Although wishing to avoid many of the nuances of the salvation history debate in this dissertation, I feel some mention of it must be included here by way of introduction for the challenge this dissertation is making to Martyn’s work and his emphasis on discontinuity. The debate sits in two main camps as made clear via two quotes below - one from Martyn whose work we are primarily concerned with and one, more lengthy in its explanation from N.T. Wright.

Martyn argues,

Indeed, one has to say that throughout Galatians, far from proposing a linear history that begins with Abraham, Paul stands in opposition to such a view. Given the work of the Teachers, Paul’s insistence on the singularity of the gospel has necessarily to be anti-heilsgeschichtlich.\(^{161}\)

On the contrary, Wright posits,

This ‘single plan’ is a salvific plan. In response to a world gone awry, a world described in Genesis 1–11, God called Abraham so that through his family he, God, could rescue the world from its plight.\(^ {162}\)

Elaborating further on the failure of Israel to be God’s salvific answer to the problem of sin, Wright states,

… what is needed . . . is a faithful Israelite through whom the single plan can proceed after all.\(^ {163}\) The Messiah, the one in whom God’s people are summed up, offers what Israel was supposed to offer, and thereby usher in the long awaited


\(^{162}\) N.T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 34.

\(^{163}\) Ibid, 105.
beginning of the entire new creation. The gospel message . . . summons men, women and children . . . to discover in Jesus, and in his messianic death for sins and new life to launch God’s new creation, the fulfilment of the single-plan-through-Israel-for-the-world, the purpose through which, as a single act with a single meaning, sins are forgiven and people of every race are called into God’s single family.

These two quotes encapsulate the division among Pauline scholars, and in fact most of those who embrace any degree of continuity, regarding the issue of whether salvation history was a fundamental aspect in Paul’s theology or whether the invasion was the beginning of something entirely new. This dissertation stands clearly on the view that is eloquently expressed by Edwin van Driel who conducted considerable research on this topic and was greatly influenced by Douglas A. Campbell, Philip Ziegler and Kimberly Miller, who all conducted their own respective studies. Van Driel concluded that,

Christ does not enter a pre-existing relationship between God and the world, but is that relationship’s origin and source: everything is created ‘for him’. His coming into the world is indeed said to be an apocalyptic event, but at the same time he is the one for whom everything is called into being. Neither the notion of an ‘apocalyptic revelation’ nor the notion of a ‘salvific history’ must thus be left behind, because within the Colossians/Ephesians framework they are not opposites, but are in fact tightly woven together. Finally, while the apocalyptic event of the revelation discloses that everything is meant to be gathered into Christ, this gathering follows a particular pattern: it begins with the covenant with Israel,

164 Ibid, 106.
165 Ibid.
and it continues with the goyim being gathered into this community as well. Since this gathering activity of Christ is not infralapsarian (a response to sin), but supralapsarian (the goal of creation), this should alleviate the fear of a functional understanding of the election of Israel.\footnote{Edward van Driel, “Climax of the Covenant vs Apocalyptic Invasion: A Theological Analysis of a Contemporary Debate in Pauline Exegesis”, \textit{International Journal of Systematic Theology} Volume 17 Number 1 January 2015, 23.}

There is no debate about the truth Scripture brings, that all things both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities have been created through Him and for Him. Scripture clearly states that He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.\footnote{Colossians 1:16-17.} Consistent with this, we would argue that Christ was there before the beginning of creation, brought the creation into being, oversaw the out-workings of the Fall and worked with humanity in providing an expression of the Kingdom of God throughout creation, culminating in His own coming, the establishment of the now and not yet kingdom through the incarnation and Calvary experience, and will usher in the fullness of this kingdom at the end of time. If what took place in the past was now consigned to the rubbish bin of meaningless history the question must be asked as to why Luke bothered to trace Jesus’ genealogy back to Adam\footnote{Luke 3:38.} and Matthew makes mention of Jesus’ non-Jewish female ancestors by name.\footnote{Matthew 1:3, 5.} Obviously, one cannot overstate the great significance of the miraculous event that coming from the

\footnote{166 Edward van Driel, “Climax of the Covenant vs Apocalyptic Invasion: A Theological Analysis of a Contemporary Debate in Pauline Exegesis”, \textit{International Journal of Systematic Theology} Volume 17 Number 1 January 2015, 23.}

\footnote{167 Colossians 1:16-17.}

\footnote{168 Luke 3:38.}

\footnote{169 Matthew 1:3, 5.}
heavenly realm the *apokalypsis Christou* invaded the world and that this incredible invasion changed everything forever. This point is brought to us by Martyn in a refreshing and dynamic way. But this dissertation will argue that this was not an end in itself. It paved the way for the role of the Kingdom of God to take up this mission, empowered by the Calvary experience and the coming of the Holy Spirit and to embrace its mission as the vanguard of this operation of Christ’s apocalyptic redemption of the cosmos. As a result, the invasion becomes part of a much bigger picture, a picture that concerns itself with the transformation of society and the call to humanity to return to God and embrace His ways. An excellent perspective has been given regarding this subject by Douglas Harink when he states,

> Apocalyptic discontinuity is original and fundamental in Paul, not because it is the discontinuity between a covenantal/historical/narrative expectation on the one hand and startling climactic outcome on the other, but because it is the primal discontinuity (in being and act) between the triune God and all that is not God. While this is not quite what Lou [Martyn] concluded, I believe it is a theological conclusion consistent with the work he did on Galatians, with its focal point in Gal 4:1–11.  

This argument reveals God’s purpose of aligning the affairs of humanity with His own intentions for creation. Taking all such happenings into account, this

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dissertation would contend that we have been given a way of life, better described in Scripture as the Way of the Lord,\textsuperscript{172} which is consistent with and subject to, the Kingdom of God.

Although some expressions of the Kingdom of God may be seen in the former covenants, this kingdom was inaugurated by means of the coming of the Messiah and is now established into the fallen world and carries with it the power and momentum of this kingdom as proclaimed in Daniel 2:44. This is not a separate work than the cross. The cross, despite being a most momentous event in the history of God’s creation, does not stand alone - it is actually an integral part of this wider mandate. Because of the cross experience, both God’s love for the fallen creation and Jesus’ obedience to the sovereign Lord, which he had consistently demonstrated throughout His life and ministry, reach their climactic result. Therefore, by fulfilling both requirements of perfect king and perfect citizen in His own person on the cross to God’s fullest satisfaction, Jesus inaugurates God’s redemptive rule on earth, recapitulating and reconstituting a new covenant community around his own mediatory personhood. He then invites repentant sinners to enter into that new sphere of communion with the triune God for their restoration to Him and the redemption of all creation.\textsuperscript{173} Elaborating on this Carl Henry states,

\textsuperscript{172} Matthew11:10; Mark 1:3; 12:14; John 14:6; Acts 2:28.
Jesus in his own person is the embodied sovereignty of God. He lives out that sovereignty in the flesh. He manifests the Kingdom of God by enthroning the creation-will of God and demonstrating his lordship over Satan. Jesus conducts himself as Lord and true King, ruling over demons, ruling over nature at its fiercest, ruling over sickness, conquering death itself. With the coming of Jesus the kingdom is not merely immanent; it gains the larger scope of incursion and invasion.  

The kingdom and cross are inextricably linked. Jesus death was necessary in order that the kingdom could become a transforming power for the whole of creation. The reign that God establishes at the cross of Christ is indeed about the conversion of sin-ridden creatures and the renewing of this evil-riddled creation with judgement and re-creation. Repentance is required, because God is already bringing humanity to account for their offensive ways of being, and the call to believe is prerequisite because God is introducing a future existence already discernible within this present experience. A true believer is embraced into the convicting and sanctifying communion of the triune God for the very purpose of devoting his or her energies to his mission in and for creation. As Robert Jenson has endeavoured to describe in his contributing essay in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology*, it is this kingdom that all of history, both biblical and what is termed (erroneously) as secular, must find their places in. Such activity brings

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transformation to the systems of life that undergird the cosmos and although it may not be as instant or obvious as the invasion of Christ, it certainly has provided the cosmos with many benefits and examples of how God intended humanity to live.

Susan Eastman sums this up well by stating,

Finally, through union with Christ who participates fully with and for the entire human race, even as it labors under the bondage of Sin, the church discovers its mission as the vanguard of Christ’s apocalyptic redemption of the cosmos.¹⁷⁶

This topic will be discussed at length later in this dissertation.

Any invasion by God Himself, or His representatives, to humanity can be nothing less than awe inspiring and life changing, but they are at the discretion of the Trinity, and in between times those in Christ have been given a mission which must continue, whether further invasion(s) comes or not. N. T. Wright insists that the Christian faith must be relevant to the events to which it refers.¹⁷⁷ This means it must have a key expression into the society it finds itself, based obviously on the Calvary experience or invasion. Martyn does not offer this. While providing powerful and exciting statements of truth, he gives no room for any further work to be carried out that has not been achieved on the cross and makes no allowance for any ongoing work to carry on this power and momentum by way of continuing and expressing this great victory. Surely the co-operation with Christ or in Christ,

¹⁷⁶ Susan Eastman, in Davis and Harink, Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 166.
suggests that an ongoing power has been made available (through the presence of the Holy Spirit), in order to continue to bring transformation to society. In doing so the argument is made that this great victory that has been gained apocalyptically is now moving in a way that provides a further expression of the ongoing crushing power of the Kingdom of God described by Daniel in Daniel 2:44 where he prophesies,

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

What is this kingdom, when does it come and what should or could this look like? It should be known as the Kingdom of God - a power that can be expressed by those in Christ, but also an ongoing power, coming from above, that carries its own momentum and will continue until the time that the Lord returns. The focus of the kingdom is not just a New Covenant phenomenon. The Bible contains the history of the Kingdom of God from its most distant beginning - creation - through to its completion, known as the Parousia (the second coming of Christ) when history will have attained its point of arrival.178 Christopher Blumhard wrote that the Kingdom of God was initially an earthly kingdom. Its purpose was so that God’s name may be hallowed on earth, so that there may be God’s kingdom on earth, and so that His  

178 Sofia Cavaletti, The History of the Kingdom of God, Part II: Liturgy and the Building of the kingdom (Cleveland, USA: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, 2012), Kindle Location 95.
will may be done on earth.\textsuperscript{179} Dietrich Bonhoeffer echoed this by stating that “only the person who loves the earth and God in one can believe in the Kingdom of God”\textsuperscript{180}. He went on to say that Christ does not lead people from a religious flight from this world into worlds behind the world: He gives the earth back to them as their faithful sons.\textsuperscript{181} Both these men were criticising the narrowing of the Christian religion to the religion of redemption, the reduction of salvation to the salvation of the individual soul, and the nineteenth century piety which was concentrated on that. They both argued that the Kingdom of God includes social salvation and the salvation or redemption (albeit not completed until Christ’s return) of the earth. Jesus’ discourse with Nicodemus on the Kingdom of God supports this by the description He used for His Kingdom,

\begin{quote}
If I told you \textit{earthly} things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (John 3:12 – underlining added).
\end{quote}

This means the ongoing power and work of the kingdom, that is able to be expressed by Christ’s followers, is the hope that has been given as a result of the overcoming of death in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

The hope that resulted from this resurrection is part of the expression of the Kingdom of God, since the abolition of death is an indistinguishable component of

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\textsuperscript{179} Jurgen Moltmann, \textit{Sun of Righteousness Arise!} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 79.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, 80.
\end{flushleft}
that kingdom.\textsuperscript{182} This new world is already beginning in the midst of the old one. It cannot begin from new. The seeds of it were sown historically despite it only being made available to humanity as a result of the “invasion” of the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. Bonhoeffer describes the difference between this hope in the Old Covenant and the hope in the New by stating that,

The difference between the hope of resurrection and the mythological hope is that the former sends a man back to his life on earth in a wholly new way which is even more sharply defined than it is in the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{183}

The scene for this kingdom was set in the Old Covenant\textsuperscript{184} and continues to bring transformation to the cosmos from this point on. Obviously, Christ is the central figure to this, which Colossians 1:16-17 states by saying,

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Such views strongly counter the view Martyn is espousing, when he describes Christ’s ultimate victory as something that has come solely in the form of the Incarnation and Cross. Martyn argues that this event has already changed the world, commencing God’s war of liberation in a way that can be celebrated in

\textsuperscript{182} Moltmann, \textit{Sun of Righteousness Arise!} 81.
\textsuperscript{184} Daniel Chapter 7 is a clear example of this.
enthusiastic terms, without forgetting the future of Christ.\textsuperscript{185} He posits that this creates a radically new age and a new perception of time.\textsuperscript{186} He is right to claim that this New Age is definitely the result of the invasion of Christ. But this dissertation would argue that not only was the dawning of such an age impregnated with history, but it also is intended to be an ongoing action. As such it requires its work or momentum to continue until this new age culminates in the return of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit in terms of regeneration, indwelling and sealing, can be found throughout redemptive history, although it takes on additional and more powerful forms in the New Covenant.\textsuperscript{187} This also forms the role and mission of the church. Contrary to this, Martyn argues that the role of the church in overcoming the world, is only possible by God’s liberating invasion through the advent and must now wait until the Parousia for any further expression of victory.\textsuperscript{188}

Although he does allow that the invasion of Christ enables all those in Christ (the church) to have authority over the enemy, Martyn fails to offer any further method to this mission. He makes no mention of the calling, commissioning, enduring and sacrificial elements the church must produce in order to serve the vision and calling of Christ in this regard. As this dissertation will continuously emphasise, invasion

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{footnotes}{\refstepcounter{footnote}\footnotesize\thefootnote}
\footnotetext{185} Galatians 5:5. \\
\footnotetext{186} Galatians 3:25; 4:4. \\
\footnotetext{187} Such as a heart of stone replaced by a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26) and the Holy Spirit dwelling within the body of the believer. \\
\footnotetext{188} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 102.
\end{footnotes}{\refstepcounter{footnote}\footnotesize\thefootnote}
\end{footnotesize}
must be followed by application to be effective, as Christ’s commission urges.\textsuperscript{189} We find Christ and the other New Testament writers to be in support of this as they call the church to an ongoing effort that must be embraced in order for it to fulfill its purpose. Taking this to its final conclusion John states in Revelation 19:7,

\begin{quote}
Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.
\end{quote}

Whatever debate there may be about what “making herself ready” means, it certainly implies that the bride has some responsibility in preparing the way for the return of the Lord, which obviously must extend beyond the invasion Martyn describes. In answer to this, I would submit that the Kingdom of God, which was inaugurated at the first coming of Christ, is moving forward under its own momentum, aided by the work of the faithful (the church) and the ongoing process or work of the Holy Spirit.

Martyn asserts that that the church is free because it is realistically descended from the heavenly Jerusalem\textsuperscript{190} and that the future, no less than the present, belongs to God’s Christ.\textsuperscript{191} What binds all of these variegated pictures together, Martyn claims, is the victorious march of God’s gospel into the world.\textsuperscript{192} He states that this victorious march is the sure expansion of the beachhead God has already won in

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{189} Matthew 28:18-20.
\textsuperscript{190} Galatians 4:26.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, 467.
\textsuperscript{192} Galatians 1:13-3.5.
\end{footnotes}
Christ.\textsuperscript{193} Despite Martyn expressing powerful and exciting statements of truth here, these activities are not defined and do not seem to be valued. In fact, Martyn gives little room for any further work to be required than that which has already been achieved on the cross. Instead, he prefers to advocate his invasion theory at the expense of the consideration that for the outworking of this great victory to be effective, it moves forward as an expression of resurrection life. Rutledge supports Martyn here, complaining that it is confounding that so much interpretation of the Scriptures continues to make human activity and human religious imagination the subject of the passage he proceeds to quote from Isaiah 46:9-10,\textsuperscript{194}

\begin{quote}
Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;
\end{quote}

I would refute that the above reference supports what Rutledge and Martyn claim. Surely, this cannot be taken, in light of the whole witness of Scripture, to mean that humans do nothing and just wait upon God to act? Rutledge does offer some role in his claim that the people of God should proclaim that whenever God has moved

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid, 103.
\textsuperscript{194} Rutledge in \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 312.
(whatever that means) His people should follow the path that He has blazed ahead for them.\textsuperscript{195} But again, such a view offers little purpose or hope for the human yearning to be involved in an adventurous life and it also denies that the message of the Kingdom of God, as declared in Daniel 2:44, has any ongoing momentum or purpose outside the said invasion of God. In Romans 1, Paul describes salvation as an ongoing event.\textsuperscript{196} Surely for one to work in co-operation with Christ or in Christ in this regard requires an ongoing mission or calling, empowered through the presence of the Holy Spirit. A further problem arises here, that has been pointed out with helpful clarity by Jodi Belcher. Belcher, in offering a critique of Martyn’s Galatians from a feministic point of view, raises the issue of the balance of power between God and Satan. She claims that Martyn has magnified the power of Satan and diminished the power of God in his concept, claiming that Martyn makes the stronghold of the evil powers in and over the cosmos rival God’s power to the extent that they pose a viable threat to God. She states,

\begin{quote}
Christ on the cross reveals the dual reign of God and the anti-God powers at once, which means that, on the one hand, he [Martyn] unveils God’s victory over anti-God powers in the new age, and on the other hand, he reveals the anti-God powers’ victorious reign over the old age.\textsuperscript{197}
\end{quote}

The dualism Belcher is concerned about here is created by Martyn via his theory that liberates the cosmos only by conceding the enslaved world to the anti-God powers and beginning a new age for God to rule. Furthermore, because the

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, 313.
\textsuperscript{196} Romans 1:16-17.
\textsuperscript{197} Belcher in \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 251.
crucifixion locates Christ in both ages at once, He must concede Himself as well, to enslavement in the old age in order to be liberator in the new age.\textsuperscript{198} Such a theory installs an unbridgeable rift in Christ’s identity and results in a presupposition being formed that suggests those in Christ can never truly be free. They are both enslaved to the anti-God powers as well as being part of a new human agency brought about by God’s apocalypse. This would pose quite a dilemma for humanity and gives us some insight as to why Martyn has little to say about any hope for human endeavours outside of crying out for further invasions from the Godhead. In the absence of any such invasions it is not unreasonable to assume, that Martyn’s perspective would be that God is playing His role “off stage” and beyond present reality and any reign from Him will only take place in the age to come. It would also lead one to assume that there is no way to entertain the possibility of God being present with His creation through all its difficulties, enslavements and deliverance, until the end of the age.\textsuperscript{199} To the contrary, I would argue that the prophetic hope of the coming of the Kingdom of God must involve a catastrophic breaking in of God, which Martyn so aptly describes, as well as both a continuity and discontinuity with the old order.\textsuperscript{200}

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid, 252.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid, 254.
\textsuperscript{200} To embark upon the discussion how continuity and discontinuity are both applicable is beyond the scope of this essay but it relates to what transcended the New Covenant and what ceased as a result of it.
What then should this look like? How does Christ save, how is the sanctification of humans worked out during their time on earth, and what is their role as salt and light in the real world? Belcher provides a hint of a better way in her statement that says,

> Instead of total destruction and new creation, which reveals God’s impotence and denies embodiment in the crucified Christ, apocalypse can be the revelation of God’s persistence to abide with bodies, vividly declared in the embodied life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus.\(^{201}\)

It is to this very concept, including the hope that Belcher makes mention of, that this dissertation will now turn. Here I will attempt to assure those in Christ, that Scripture provides a far greater hope for the role of God’s people, than what Martyn has offered.

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\(^{201}\) Belcher in *Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology*, 261.
IV Continuity and the Biblical Narrative in the Context of Covenant, Kingdom and Mission

1. Introduction

In order to be consistent with the teaching of the Scriptures, any interpretation and application of them must: (1) take seriously what Scripture claims to be; and (2) interpret Scripture in light of what it actually is as God’s unfolding revelation across time. Thus, as more revelation is given over time and through later Biblical authors, we discover more of God’s plan and where that plan is going. Underneath all of these literary forms is an underlying story line, beginning in creation and moving to the new creation, which unfolds God’s plan centred and culminated in Jesus Christ. This dissertation embraces the view that the Biblical narrative provides an ongoing history that goes from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 and has, as its central theme, the Kingdom of God which embraces the continuity of covenant. This is offered as evidence in the argument against Martyn’s theory, which states that all previous covenants have nothing to do with the invasion of Christ and the subsequent inauguration of the new age. Before exploring the concept of the Biblical narrative or story, some deeper discussion should be

202 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom Through Covenant, 82-3.
203 Ibid.
204 An in-depth study of this is found in Kevin Vanhoozer, Is There A Meaning in this Text: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge (Grand Rapids, M.I.: Zondervan, 1998).
provided on one of the key issues at stake here - that of Biblical continuity and/or discontinuity.

2. Continuity/Discontinuity

Arthur Glasser rightly states that the New Testament is incomprehensible without the Hebrew Scriptures, noting the importance of its portrayal of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.\textsuperscript{205} He proceeds to explain the indisputable fact that many essential perspectives and features of the biblical faith are not explicitly developed in the New Testament because the Spirit of God has already adequately developed them in the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{206} As a result, Christians discover their roots in both the Old Testament and the New. I would argue, as Glasser does, that God’s rule is both universal and covenantal. Invasion, as per Martyn is a dramatic intrusion into the present world. The impact of this on the purpose and plans of God are undeniable. However, God is never totally preoccupied with just the present. The prophets of old frequently pointed to the future. An excellent and well-known example is found in the book of Habakkuk.

> For the earth will be filled
> With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
> As the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

\textsuperscript{205} Arthur F. Glasser, \textit{Announcing the Kingdom}, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 19.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
In debating Martyn’s view on this, Douglas Harink states that if we are to speak of Scripture, tradition, and history in terms of trains, tracks, and arrows, the trains on the straightforward tracks of Scripture and tradition all arrive at a dead end.\textsuperscript{207} To quote Martyn,

“…scripture comes into being by acquiring an indelible link to belief in Jesus’ words and deeds [alone].\textsuperscript{208}”

Many problems with this approach have already been raised by this dissertation and I will now raise yet another concern in regard to God’s desire for His people to gain a knowledge of Himself and His ways.

Without the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, especially in regard to the covenantal relationships and the Kingdom of God, two aspects which this dissertation is especially concerned about, a very incomplete picture of the Trinitarian God is given. Throughout the Old Testament requests are made for God (Yahweh, Elohim) to reveal Himself to His people. His responses to these requests are foundational to the human understanding of who He is and also create a confidence and assurance amongst His people that He would, or even could, fulfil the promises He made to them. An example here is found in Exodus 34:6-7,

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity,
transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, 
visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third 
and fourth generations.”

This becomes a somewhat common description of Yahweh and shows up in several 
places throughout the Old Testament providing important information about the 
nature and character of God. Such descriptions were foundational to the 
revelation brought to us by Jesus Christ during His time on earth. Commenting on 
the work of Bruce Waltke, an unknown reviewer aptly states,

> The Old Testament is more than a religious history of the nation of Israel. It is 
more than a portrait of the gallery of heroes of the faith. It is even more than a 
theological and prophetic backdrop to the New Testament. Beyond these, the Old 
Testament is an inspired revelation of the very nature and character of God and of 
the meaning of history.

Waltke’s view is based on his understanding that the Old and New Testaments are 
united by the view that God is establishing His kingship over a hostile world to 
establish His glory.

This is the very bond that gives the sense of God’s divine activity over the whole 
period of history (Genesis 1 - Revelation 22), as He works to restore the creation 
to what He intended it to be. Although this cannot (and must not) be ignored, it

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211 Ibid, 45.
is not to suggest that this is the only purpose for maintaining a continuity between the two Testaments. To do so would rob any reader of the wealth of other rich biblical truths that are there to be gleaned about the nature and character of God and His relationship with His people and the cosmos. A useful example here is given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10. Here we have a situation where Paul refers to the journey of the nation of Israel, coming out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, under Moses leadership. He talks about the “spiritual” food they received and the water that came from the rock. He then states that the rock was Christ. What this shows is that Christ was involved in the covenant between God and Israel and in this way, Paul establishes a correspondence between Israel in the wilderness and the Christian community (remember this passage is about the Eucharist). Paul states that Israel shares the altar with those in Christ, in the present - they are both eating and drinking from the same source - Christ. What can be concluded by this passage is that while the people of Israel, in their wanderings, were subject to the power of sin, they also lived in the presence of God as do those in Christ today. What we see from Paul here is his identifying God as Christ in the Old Covenant well before He was known to be the Messiah. A comment by Siebeck, regarding the concept of “In Christ” in Paul’s writing explains the point here well.

212 The word “testament” is used advisedly here as a useful separation of the writings that separate the time before and after Christ, rather than their being an entity in their own right.
214 1 Corinthians 10:4.
215 See verses 16-18.
Given that the significance of Jesus’ bodily death is presented in terms of the experience of his forebears, and his forebears’ experience is presented in terms of the presence of Jesus, I want to suggest that Paul intends for us to understand the two as part of a singular redemptive work and that this has significance for how we understand the human element of the ontology of the Incarnation. It is, in other words, important to Paul that Christ, our Passover, was chosen from within the flock of Israel, the people set apart. The union of God to humanity that is internal to the Incarnation involves not just any representative humanity, it involved a humanity that was derived from the nation that was in covenant with God.\footnote{Grand Macaskill, “Incarnational Ontology and the theology of Participation in Paul, in “In Christ” in Paul: Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation, eds. Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2018), 97. First published in German, Mohr Siebeck, 2014.}

This reveals a continuity which extends well before the New Covenant and connects this covenant significantly with the history that has gone before it. A further study of Scripture reveals that the continuity of the narrative also extends beyond the initial coming of the Messiah. We see that God establishes His rule over His elect covenant people through the Kingship of Jesus Christ, who then, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, places God’s imperative rule within the hearts of those whom Christ has freed from slavery, sin and death.\footnote{Ibid, 145.} Even in the final coming of Christ and the consummation of the ages, John describes the role the people of God have played in bringing this event to fruition when he states in Revelation 19:7

\begin{quote}
Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.
\end{quote}
Theologians debate what it actually means for the bride to have made herself ready, but it is agreed that it certainly does require some type of action from the church that contributes to the progression of the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{219} Although it is agreed that the church is not the kingdom, it certainly, as Ladd puts it, bears witness to the kingdom - to God’s redeeming acts in Christ both past and future.\textsuperscript{220} He states,

The church has a dual character, belongs to two ages. It is the people of the Age to Come, but it still lives in this age, being constituted of sinful mortal men. This means that while the church in this age will never attain perfection, it must nevertheless display the life of the perfect order, the eschatological Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{221}

There are similarities here to Martyn’s theory but it becomes different when exploring the concept of the Kingdom of God. There has always been a “now and not yet” aspect to the kingdom. The portrait of God’s kingdom on the broad canvas of the Bible depicts the realisation of Israel’s physical kingdom in the Old Testament as a picture of the true kingdom to come. Here a greater seed emerges from Abraham’s seed - not a physical people but a spiritual people, true inheritors of his faith.\textsuperscript{222} Martyn of course, denies this. He places no emphasis at all on any chronologically imminent occurrence within world history.\textsuperscript{223} Agreeing with

\textsuperscript{219} G. K. Beale, \textit{NIGTC: The Book of Revelation} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1999), 935. \\
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{222} Waltke, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, 168. \\
\textsuperscript{223} David W. Congdon, in \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 124.
Bultmann, Martyn claims that the apocalypse is not an event alongside other events in history, nor does it create a new historical age that appears to all people apart from faith. On the contrary, it is an epistemological crisis in the sense that it alters the complete human relationship with the world. Going further, it can be said that the Christ-event transfigures history for the one who faithfully participates in it.²²⁴ An acceptance of this leaves us with a very limited view and understanding of who God is and what He is about. Therefore, I would argue strongly that the historical concept of continuity is vital for the overall Gospel narrative to make sense.²²⁵

3. The Biblical Story

The biblical narrative, begins with a Triune creator God who is the maker of the world and all that is in it. Humans are the crowning glory of this work. A clear difference is established between human creatures and all the other living creatures: we alone have been made as the image of this creator God, resulting in a covenant relationship with Him and with all creation which entails a particular role and special tasks in the world. Unfortunately, the first humans damaged this standing when they rebelled against God, bringing chaos and discord in the creation at every level and bringing destruction and death to all of life.²²⁶ Fortunately, God in all His wisdom, had already prepared a plan to restore humanity to its former glory

²²⁴ Ibid, 126.
²²⁵ Of course, this assumes that we accept there is a biblical narrative.
²²⁶ Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom Through Covenant, 247.
and to reinstate the Kingdom of God to its rightful place.\textsuperscript{227} It is to this plan that we will now turn.

4. Nothing Without Covenant

Covenant theology not only organises the history of the world in terms of covenant, it also contends that what brings all of the diverse themes of Scripture together is the theme of covenant. In so doing it reveals the biblical narrative that permeates the Scriptures. Describing this Alistair Wilson and Jamie Grant posit,

\begin{quotation}
The idea of covenant is fundamental to the Bible’s story. At its most basic, covenant presents God’s desire to enter into relationship with men and women created in his image. This is reflected in the repeated covenant refrain, “I will be your God and you will be my people” (Exodus 6:6-8; Leviticus 26:12, etc.). Covenant is all about relationship between the Creator and his creation. The idea may seem simple; however, the implications of covenant and covenant relationship between God and humankind are vast…\textsuperscript{228}
\end{quotation}

Obviously, as demonstrated with Noah and the ark experience, we recognise that God’s covenant relationship exceeds just the people of this planet. The whole of the created order in also included. To provide the narrative plot structure of the Bible, John Walton explains that covenant connects a number of crucial theological

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{227} 1 Peter 1:20. \\
\textsuperscript{228} Alistair Wilson, and Jamie Grant, \textit{The God of Covenant: Biblical, Theological, and Contemporary Perspectives}, (Leicester, U.K. Apollos, 2005), 12.
\end{flushright}
differences within Christian theology, brings resolution to those differences, and reveals how they are directly tied to one's understanding of how these differences relate to one another.\textsuperscript{229} Describing this in very practical terms, Walton gives us a useful oversight when he says,

\begin{quote}
God has a plan in history that he is sovereignly executing. The goal of that plan is for him to be in relationship with the people whom he has created. It would be difficult for people to enter into a relationship with a God whom they do not know. If his nature were concealed, obscured or distorted, an honest relationship would be impossible. In order to clear the way for this relationship then, God has undertaken as a primary objective a program of self-revelation. He wants people to know him. The mechanism that drives this program is the covenant, and the instrument is Israel. The purpose of the covenant is to reveal God.\textsuperscript{230}
\end{quote}

To substantiate the emphasis placed on covenant here, it would be prudent to gain, at least to some degree, an understanding of what a biblical covenant actually is, with a particular focus on the covenant God made with Abraham.

At the beginning of creation, God creates a man and a woman with the intention of developing a divine-human relationship with two dimensions, one vertical and one horizontal.\textsuperscript{231} Hans Walter Wolff provides an interesting comment about this when he states,

\textsuperscript{231} Genesis 1:26-28.
Accordingly, man is set in the midst of creation as God’s statue. He is evidence that God is the Lord of creation; but as God’s steward he also exerts his rule, fulfilling his task not in arbitrary despotism but as a responsible agent. His rule and duty to rule are not autonomous; they are copies.\textsuperscript{232}

Alas, all does not stay well for long. Adam and Eve succumb to temptation resulting in sin entering into the world and the “pure” relationship with God and humanity becoming severed. As a result, God judged the human race, banishing Adam and Eve from the garden. The ongoing degradation of humanity continues, so God, being sorely provoked, decides to make a fresh start by destroying all of humanity and the animal kingdom with a great flood. However He spared Noah, his family and representatives of the vast animal kingdom by granted their shelter in an ark he instructed Noah to build.\textsuperscript{233} As a result, Noah became the new Adam.\textsuperscript{234} Genesis 6 describes the first of a series of covenants that are made in order to re-establish the Divine engagement with the world and humanity, including the stewardship of creation.\textsuperscript{235} The covenants made from this point on were vehicles designed to move God’s people towards His ultimate goal of bringing about a whole new creation in Christ. Unfortunately, these covenants failed to produce the intended results because of the inherent sinfulness of humanity. Noah gets drunk

\textsuperscript{233} Genesis chapters 3-8.
\textsuperscript{234} It is not the intention of this essay to explore the nuances of this history. Only a brief reference is required. The main purpose of this work is to pick up the story with the covenant made with Abraham.
\textsuperscript{235} William Dumbrell, \textit{Covenant and Creation} (Crownhill, United Kingdom: Paternoster, 2013), 1.
and brings about the same chaos and corruption as the first family.\textsuperscript{236} So again, God makes another new start (less catastrophic), with Abraham\textsuperscript{237} and his family.

It is God’s intention, through Abraham’s family to bring His blessing to all the nations of the world. But here God takes it upon Himself to fulfil all His requirements and pay the price for the failure of Abraham and subsequent generations to fulfil theirs.\textsuperscript{238} Continuing from Abraham’s line through to Israel, and then to Christ as the last Adam, God will bring about the resolution of the sin and death caused by the first Adam and the restoration of the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{239}

As a result we can state that the covenant made with Abraham is the basis for all God’s dealings with the human race from this point on, and the basis of all His later plans and purposes in history. The line of disaster and of the ‘curse’, from Adam, through Cain, through the Flood to Babel, begins to be reversed when God calls Abraham and says, “in you all the families of the earth be blessed.”\textsuperscript{240} God intends to establish His rule over all of His creation through His relationship with Abraham and his family, making them the instrument of rescuing and restoring His broken creation. Abraham symbolically emerges (as a type) within the structure of Genesis as the answer to the plight of all humankind. The Abrahamic covenant, connects to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[236] Genesis 9:20-27.
\item[237] Originally known as Abram, this dissertation will refer to him in his later name, Abraham.
\item[238] Genesis 15.
\item[239] Dumbrell, \textit{Covenant and Creation}, 247.
\item[240] Genesis 12:3.
\end{footnotes}
the Davidic covenant and then moves through to the New Covenant respectively, all the while remaining central to it - as the Apostle Paul endorses in Romans 4 by stating that Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised.

5. The Abrahamic Covenant

In referring to covenant, I have already noted that Martyn claims that a brand-new community is created by those who are “in Christ” and that all other historical factors have no real significance. He argues for a totally new unified life (in Christ). Contrary to Martyn, I would argue that the Abrahamic Covenant is the “gateway to the Kingdom of God.” It is a calling into existence of a new creation, a situation after Babel in which God will make a another new beginning. Leaving the chaos of human history behind, God calls Abraham, as He later does with Israel, to an exodus, eventually bringing His carefully chosen descendants into a Promised Land which was intended to become a new Eden. The essence of this new beginning is described in Genesis 12-18 and establishes several foundational truths, both internal and external, which the Kingdom of God must be built on. It

242 Martyn, Galatians, 382.
244 Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 69.
245 It should be stated at this point, that this dissertation accepts without question that the covenant made with Abraham is only a shadow or sign of things to come. The ultimate fulfilment of this promise will be established in and by the coming of Christ as described in Galatians 3.
contains seven promises all revealing the significance of God’s blessing, designed to ultimately produce the final emergence of a new populated world. They are as follows.

1. I will make you a great nation.
2. I will bless you.
3. I will make your name great.
4. You will be a blessing.
5. I will bless those who bless you.
6. Whoever curses you, I will curse.
7. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.\textsuperscript{246}

In Genesis 15 and 17, the great promises to Abraham will be enshrined in a divine-human covenant between God and Abraham. Through the patriarch and his descendants, the vice-regency of the human race would be extended through to the Israelites in the land of Canaan. With Abraham comes another new era (again with God as the keeper and redeemer of all human failure) in order to rectify the plight of all humankind, from its separation from God. The line of disaster and of the ‘curse’, from Adam, through Cain, through the Flood to Babel, begins to be reversed when God calls Abraham stating the seventh promise, “in you all the families of the earth be blessed.”\textsuperscript{247} An interesting point here develops in both the

\textsuperscript{246} Waltke, \textit{Looking into the Future}, 17.
\textsuperscript{247} Wright, \textit{The New Testament and the People of God}, 262.
initiation of the covenant and its further outworking at a little further on. The ceremony that is used is known to the Hebrews as “to cut a covenant” (kārat bērit).

This ceremony involves an oath in which the covenant partners bring the curse of death upon themselves if they are not faithful to the covenant relationship and promises.248 This is described more clearly in the book of Jeremiah where it says,

I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts — the officials of Judah and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers and the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf — I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth (Jeremiah 34:18-20).

It was a way of saying, “May I become like these dead animals if I do not keep my promise(s) and my oath.”249 But this covenant was significantly different. Before the ceremony takes place, Abraham is put to sleep during which time he receives a vision of a smoking oven and a blazing torch, which passed between the pieces.250 A quick biblical exploration reveals that these symbols both represent the presence of God walking in the midst of His people.251 What is significant here is that since Abraham did not walk through the pieces he is not under an obligation to the Lord to bring about the promises, thus ensuring the preservation and deliverance of Abraham’s descendants. The point is clear. In denying Abraham the opportunity to

248 Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 251.
249 Ibid.
250 Genesis 15:17.
walk through the pieces with Him, God has taken it upon Himself to fulfil the covenant and pay the price of any failure of either party’s loyalty to it. This comes at a huge cost, which is made clear as the Abrahamic story continues.

In Genesis 22 we learn that God instructs Abraham to offer his beloved son Isaac as a human sacrifice in the region of Moriah. Incredibly Abraham obeys, but at the moment he is about to sacrifice his son, God (or His messenger) stops him in his tracks. At that point Abraham notices a ram caught up in the bushes and offers it as a sacrifice instead. God is pleased by Abraham’s obedience and faithfulness and commends him for it, again establishing the promise that in Abraham’s seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.\textsuperscript{252} Despite this, and other favourable achievements, Abraham was not a perfect covenant partner and represented Yahweh poorly in a number of other ways. The same applies in all other covenants, which, throughout the long history of Israel, always end in unfaithfulness and disobedience. Because neither Abraham, his son or the subsequent nation of Israel honoured the conditions of the covenant that was made in Genesis chapter 15, this meant, under the covenant conditions, that a death is required. Because God alone went through the pieces in the covenant made with Abraham, the death penalty would be God’s alone to bear. This was made very clear by God refusing to allow Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Two thousand years later, God’s own beloved Son was put on the altar. This time there was no sacrificial ram to take His place. The death

\textsuperscript{252} Genesis 22:18.
penalty was served and the supreme sacrifice was made. The Son became the ultimate sacrifice, setting the way clear for the purposes of God to be achieved through His people and the Kingdom of God to begin its reign upon the earth. The Gospel of John describes this beautifully.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16-18).

Relevant to this debate with Martyn, the point being made here is that there is a total progression, connection and fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham and the New Covenant instituted by Christ. To attempt to bring a disconnect between these two, and the other covenants established in the journey narrated in the Old Testament, is suggesting that much, if not all, of God’s work and sacrifice in the times before the New Covenant were irrelevant to life and to His purposes. Such an argument must be contested in any theological discussion.

What is set through covenant, as an ongoing requirement of God, is that life in God’s world, in order to gain the maximum benefit for humanity, was to proceed in God’s way, ultimately resulting in a human/godly dominion over creation with the elimination of all evil from the world. This will be achieved in and through Christ but its preceding history cannot be discounted as Martyn argues. This history is essential in providing the framework for the coming of Christ and what the Messianic “invasion” was destined to deliver. The New Testament reveals that
God’s promises to Abraham are fulfilled in the Messiah through the new covenant.\textsuperscript{253} In instigating this New Covenant, Jesus not only represents the household of faith of both testaments,\textsuperscript{254} but He also extends the link between Abraham’s physical offspring and all of this who accept Jesus Christ, be they Jew or Gentile.\textsuperscript{255} Debating this, Martyn claims that the seed of Christ was not in the covenant made with Abraham, arguing instead that the blessing of God has “come to the Gentiles” not that the Gentiles have been granted the possibility of “entering the blessed family of Abraham.”\textsuperscript{256} It is here that one of the failings of Martyn’s work is clearly seen. Martyn bases this view not on the fact that there is no longer a blood link, as John 1:12 testifies to, but on his view that there is an inseparable connection between the Old Testament covenants and the Sinaitic Law.\textsuperscript{257} His view is that if you assume an ongoing role for the covenants you must also assume and ongoing role for The Law. This is not the case. The covenants and The Law, although deeply partnered, should not be seen as one and the same, evidenced ironically, by the Apostle Paul in Galatians where he states,

\begin{quote}
What I am saying is this: The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise (Galatians 3:17).
\end{quote}

Failing to acknowledge this, Martyn, with many lengthy discourses in his book, comments (rightly) on the inability of The Law to provide rectification, and as a

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{253} Galatians 3.
\textsuperscript{255} John 1:12.
\textsuperscript{256} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 349.
\textsuperscript{257} Ibid, 345.
\end{flushright}
result, discounts any historical value at all in previous covenants in regard to the new age inaugurated by Christ.\textsuperscript{258} His constant argument is that all that preceded Christ must die in order for this new age to come about.\textsuperscript{259} This dissertation however, posits that the New Covenant inaugurated by Christ is not a discontinuation of previous covenants at all. It is a fulfilment of them, along with God’s ultimate intention of bringing salvation to all nations. As the writer of Ephesians describes,

By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, (Ephesians 3:4-6).

It is true, as Martyn states, that Jesus Christ asserts His authority over all nations and commissions His disciples to make disciples of all nations, and again, that there are many new aspects to this covenant, that now appear. But what Martyn does not acknowledge is the true purpose of this. Jesus Christ has come, as Israel’s King to renew the relationship by inaugurating a new covenant and bringing about the rule of God in the lives of those who are part of this new creation, both Jew and Gentile alike. God’s law is no longer written on rock tablets but inscribed by the Holy Spirit

\textsuperscript{258} As evidenced by Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 269-276.
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid, 380.
on the hearts of all the subjects of this kingdom. The king’s throne is no longer in earthly Jerusalem but in heavenly Mount Zion from which the King of Kings and Lord of Lords administers His kingdom through His Holy Spirit. Martyn rightly claims that this is a “new creation, or age” but fails to see that it comes about as a result of the continuity of God’s ongoing work to right the wrongs caused by Adam and Eve. His purpose, since the “fall” described in Genesis 3, was always to re-establish His Ways in the created order and to bring the fullness of the covenant He made with Abraham into what is rightly called the new creation. This requires that the unfolding of history always was, and still is, taking place throughout the ages and is progressive as well as being invasive. This now brings us to explore the evidence of this found in the book of Daniel as we move towards what is intended to be the crowning jewel of creation - the Kingdom of God.

6. Daniel’s Prophecy

The book of Daniel provides essential evidence for the claim of this dissertation, that the Kingdom of God is an entity in its own right, one that carries its own momentum, obviously drawn from the spirit of God. Daniel saw the image of this in his dreams during a time of persecution, terror and death of the people of Israel. This particular dream portrays the prophetic hope of the coming of the kingdom as a catastrophic breaking in of God, bringing His people back to the covenantal relationship. It also portrays a continuity and discontinuity of the old order by

\[260\] 2 Corinthians 3:3.
offering the hope of something that will ultimately redeem the world. As Gerhard Vos states,

> It is especially in the Book of Daniel that the idea of the future kingdom of Jehovah is developed in contrast with the world-monarchies through which his kingdom appeared in abeyance for the present.\(^{263}\)

Sometime during the Babylonian exile, the reigning King, Nebuchadnezzar, had a troubling dream. Rather than describe the dream to his magicians in order for them to interpret it, he required that his magicians first declare what this dream was and then give its interpretation, with the warning that failure to do this would result in all of them being put to death. They were dismayed. To be able to describe someone’s dream before giving an interpretation was unheard in the world at that time and the magicians protested bitterly, claiming that no man on earth could do such a thing. As a result, the guards began to arrest them for the purpose of their execution. Included in this group of “wise men” were Daniel and his friends.\(^{264}\)

Upon hearing this edict Daniel humbled himself before the Lord, received insight to the dream and its interpretation, and then approached Nebuchadnezzar, informing him that he was able to comply. He then proceeded to describe the dream vividly, followed by an interpretation of it, leaving the king astonished and in awe.

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\(^{264}\) Daniel Chapter 2.
A further historical analysis of every part of this dream is not relevant to this dissertation but the essence of this dream is foundational to the argument this dissertation is offering. This is found in Daniel 2:44-45 which states,

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will
never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will
crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

“Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and
that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God
has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true
and its interpretation is trustworthy.

Although there are some variations on the specifics, most Christian commentators
agree that Daniel is here referring to the coming Kingdom of God that will be
established at Christ’s first coming during the era of the Roman Empire.²⁶⁵ It is
revealing that the kingdom(s) of the world will be broken to pieces by the kingdom
which the God of heaven will set up.²⁶⁶ Such a kingdom, erected by the God of
heaven, shall forever remain immoveable, in contrast to the world-kingdoms,
which will all ultimately fall. The power of this kingdom cannot be made clear
enough. It will exist eternally without change of its dominion, contrary to the
world-kingdoms which are always changing and bringing one another to
dissolution; it will break in pieces and destroy all other kingdoms bringing them to
an end, and it alone shall exist for ever.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ E.g. Keil & Delitzsche; Matthew Henry; Hendrickson; Waltke; Moltmann; N.T. Wright.
²⁶⁶ Keil & Delitzsche, Commentary on the Book of Daniel (Massachusetts; USA, Hendriksen
²⁶⁷ Ibid.
A further point of relevance to this work is the fact that such a stone, by way of Daniel’s description, will be released from its mountain and will commence rolling without any human intervention. From that time on, its momentum will crush and destroy anything and everything in its path. Here we can see an entity (the Kingdom of God) that has power, direction and purpose. Although many such commentators could be quoted here, Matthew Henry proves most helpful by offering a more simplified view than many of his fellow commentators, when he says,

The stone cut out without hands represented the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which should be set up in the world in the time of the Roman empire, and upon the ruins of Satan’s kingdom in the kingdoms of the world. This is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, for it should be neither raised nor supported by human power or policy; no visible hand should act in the setting of it up, but it should be done invisibly by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. This was the stone which the builders refused, because it was not cut out by their hands, but it has now become the head-stone of the corner. It is a kingdom not of this world, and yet set up in it; it is the Kingdom of God among men. The God of heaven was to set up this kingdom, to give authority to Christ to execute judgment, to set him as King upon his holy hill of Zion, and to bring into obedience to him a willing people. Being set up by the God of heaven, it is often in the New Testament called the kingdom of heaven, for its original is from above and its tendency is upwards. 268

268 Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Isaiah-Malachi (Iowa Falls, USA, World Bible Publishers, 1990), 1032.
Henry goes on to reiterate how this kingdom will be set up in defiance of all other kings, who would seek to oppose the work of God and His kingdom. He states that it is a kingdom that knows no decay, is never in any danger of destruction and will overcome any force that would seek to invade it. Of particular relevance is his comment that the combined powers of earth and hell cannot deprive either the subjects of their prince or the prince of His subjects.\textsuperscript{269} Although I would be sympathetic to the claim that this would include all earthly kingdoms it needs to be stated that evil in this world goes far beyond political or human enemies. Any evil that is present within each individual is associated with Satan and his demons. It is these elements that are the true enemies that the Kingdom of God confronts, albeit often expressed through human agencies.

What is being suggested here is that Daniel is announcing that the coming of the Kingdom of God through the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This Kingdom will consider any other kingdom arising, to be a violation of the Kingdom of God and will ultimately destroy them. The final result of this, which will come with the Parousia, will be that all/any rule, principality or power that is outside the Kingdom of God, will be destroyed and Christ, having made all His enemies to be His footstool, will assume His reign over this everlasting kingdom. Henry, again serves

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid.
the argument presented here well by drawing from a number of biblical verses in saying,

Those kingdoms of the earth that had broken in pieces all about them at length came, in their turn, to be in like manner broken; but the kingdom of Christ shall break other kingdoms in pieces and shall itself stand for ever. His throne shall be as the days of heaven, his seed, his subjects, as the stars of heaven, not only so innumerable, but so immutable. Of the increase of Christ’s government and peace there shall be no end. The Lord shall reign forever, not only to the end of time, but when time and days shall be no more, and God shall be all in all to eternity.270

The claim being made here is that this kingdom has a strictly Divine origin and is a very different kingdom that anything that has gone before it. It brings with it some “violent action” or positive “crushing force” that it will use against all that opposes it or attempts to coincide with it. Such details are given in the earlier verse of Daniel 2. It picks up the heart of Psalm Two, particularly verse nine which says,

You shall break them with a rod of iron,

You shall shatter them like earthenware.

This does not necessarily mean that there will be "physical" force, or power similar to that by which earthly kingdoms have often been overturned (corruption, tyranny, betrayal, military defeat). The kingdom of the Redeemer is a kingdom of "principles," and those principles will subdue and bring the nations into subjection. Obviously, reinforcing the argument of this dissertation regarding the “progressive work of God”, this will not be accomplished all "at once." It will be a gradual

270 Ibid. See also 1 Corinthians 15:24-25.
process, like a continual beating on the image, reducing it ultimately to powder. Of course, various “invasions” may well come in the form of revival and other such actions that are brought about via the Trinity without any co-operation from the church. Samuel Adams makes an interesting contribution here when he states,

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2:31-45 can be understood along these lines as the progression of kingdoms, and thus of history, that is finally not transferred to a new kingdom, but is shattered by the kingdom that is cut “not by human hands” (Dan 2:34). With the kingdom, history ends and a new history from “outside” begins.\textsuperscript{271}

Although this may offer some support to Martyn’s theory of invasion, Adams goes on to explain that it is wrong to consider this as being an abrupt disconnect. Instead he joins Wright in describing it as a similar transition as death and resurrection.\textsuperscript{272} It brings about God’s purposes as planned from the beginning, while removing the evil or fallen component (the history of Cain as Bonhoeffer called it) and aligns itself with the ever-present journey and conclusion of the Kingdom of God. As Wright states, it is an “end” as in a goal reached, not an “end as a “thankful termination.”\textsuperscript{273}

So here we can conclude that Daniel’s vision gives evidence of the progression of a kingdom and thus of history that has always been intended and progressively

\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid.
achieved by God. Martyn offers no consideration at all for an ongoing and progressive power, to “roll” through the ages, gathering with it all those who would join Christ and destroy all other kingdoms that would be raised in opposition to it. It is this kingdom, founded in Christ, that provides an example of how God intended humanity to live.

A further point in regard to the vision of Daniel is the fact that he mentioned that this very kingdom would be handed over to the saints.\textsuperscript{274} This supports the argument presented by this dissertation that the work of the Kingdom of God exceeds the invasion of Christ and continues throughout history. It lines up well with the commission given to the church and supports the teaching the writer to the Ephesians gives in 3:9-10 where he states,

\begin{quote}
and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.
\end{quote}

It is to this end that the inauguration of the Kingdom of God invades society. It comes with an ongoing momentum that not only has its own energy, but gathers up the energy given to it by the people in Christ, who are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, this does not happen without opposition (warfare) - a point Martyn has much to say about.

\textsuperscript{274} Daniel 7:22 & 27.
7. Warfare and Continuity

Martyn rightly claims that the invasion of Christ has completely reconfigured or reinvented the nature of warfare faced by humanity. Many changes take place as a result of the great victory at Calvary. Those in Christ are now placed in a position of authority that was lost with the fall in the Garden of Eden. However, Martyn is wrong to suggest that this warfare was new. Right from the fall a declaration and description of this warfare was given. In Genesis 3:15 God proclaims,

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.

From this point, throughout the Old Testament we see where obvious influences of evil are declared as instigating sin and disobedience to God. The battle between God’s people and the evil one was prevalent at all times, since the fall and God frequently rallied His people to challenge and overcome such evil. What the New Testament definitely does reveal is that there is now a whole new battle on the human front between the flesh and the spirit. Martyn refers to this as two new opposites coming into being (flesh and spirit) which was born through God’s new creative act of sending His Son and the Holy Spirit to the world.275 Without a doubt

275 Martyn, Galatians, 100.
this warfare, as Paul reveals, is clearly a struggle that all those of the new creation must participate in. The book of Ephesians makes it clear that the powers of darkness are behind this warfare - it is constantly fueled by spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.\textsuperscript{276} But even allowing for this, I would argue that Martyn takes his invasion theory too far. It is true that there are new aspects of warfare and a complete shift in empowerment and authority as a result of the coming of Christ. The followers of Christ have been put in a place of power and authority that is unique in history up until that time - even to the extent that they now have power over sin and the failings of their own flesh and temptations.\textsuperscript{277} Although this certainly is a new authority, can it be argued that it is a completely new battle? Biblical evidence would suggest that it is a very old one - one that has plagued humanity since the fall but has now undergone a major power shift. All the players remain the same - God, His creation and the enemy with his own cohorts. Admittedly the out-workings are completely different, as this is the age of the dawning of the Kingdom of God, but Martyn seems again to be guilty of taking the continuity/discontinuity too far.

The argument of course, is not that Martyn would deny that there were no pockets of resistance to sin in the previous age. Almost every biblical scholar would concede that. It could be that Martyn would claim that the warfare was more one

\textsuperscript{276} Ephesians 6:12.  
\textsuperscript{277} 1 John 4:4.
of subterfuge and subtlety in previous times, and it wasn’t until the advent of Christ that its true nature was revealed. If so, that would be more acceptable but this is not made clear in his book. A better way to state this could be that the war of liberation is brought by Christ to sin. Before Christ’s death on the cross, there are people who, living in anticipation of his victory, did wage war against sin, but any actions of total victory are only possible in the end because of Christ’s invasion.

Continuing in this vein Martyn claims that the whole of humanity – indeed, the whole of creation - is in fact, enslaved under the power of the present evil age. That is the background of God’s invasive action in His sending of Christ, in His declaration of war, and in His striking the decisive and liberating blow against the power of the present evil age. God’s sending of Christ to suffer death on behalf of humanity (the cross) and Christ’s future coming (the Parousia) are clearly invasive acts of God. And, Martyn argues, the fact of their being invasive acts – into a space that has temporarily fallen out of God’s hands – points to the liberating war that is crucial to Paul’s apocalyptic theology. It is this apocalyptic vision that has given Paul his perception of the nature of the human plight. This is both a most useful and also disappointing discourse by Martyn. He aptly describes the incarnation with excellent clarity and understanding, by presenting to the reader a succinct overview as to what has happened, including the disempowering of the

278 Ibid, 105.
279 Ibid.
present evil age, and, as a result, what will ultimately happen at the end of this current age. The fact that an invasion has taken place is beyond debate, in fact it could be argued that we may well see others throughout time before the return of Christ. But the question that I would raise in regard to Martyn’s presentation is “what about the work required in between such invasions?” Why is it that all such ongoing actions should be limited to, or placed under the heading of, apocalyptic? Indeed, I would argue that the Cross was definitely Christ’s invasive event but from this event the Kingdom of God was inaugurated, liberated and commenced its journey of moving through history, bringing freedom to the captives, liberty to all who embrace it and an ongoing sanctification to society. It also brings an important mission to the people of God. Zorn is helpful here when he comments,

Though it is still true that the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one (1 John 5:19) this describes only the sphere of his kingdom’s manifestation which is an ever-shrinking sphere under retreat from the advance of Christ’s kingdom. And again,

The Kingdom of God comes in a process of ages, and the kingdom of Satan is slowly but surely forced to retreat. And the Church of the Lord, the people of God, has the enduring vocation concerning that coming of the Kingdom of God to be and to remain under her king the church militant.

280 This is not to suggest there will ever be anything like the Incarnation and Calvary experience - this is a completed work - but God is at liberty to impact the created order at will in many other ways.
281 Raymond Zorn, Christ Triumphant (Great Britain, Bath Press, 1997), 29.
282 Ibid, 38.
Obviously, some questions do arise here. It could be asked whether the death and resurrection of Christ was both the beginning and the completion, the single point around which everything revolves, OR is it just the beginning, from which we move on to some other reality? The answer may well be “yes” to both suggestions. The Scriptures endorse the fact that there is nothing more to be added to the work Christ did via the cross and the resurrection - indeed His work was completely finished at the cross\textsuperscript{283} - but also that, in Paul's words, we must press on to lay hold of that which we were laid hold of by Christ Jesus.\textsuperscript{284} Martyn does concede that from this point (Christ's invasion), all followers of Him must become active soldiers on the Spirit’s field of battle.\textsuperscript{285} He speaks further of the “victorious march of God’s gospel into the world” and that His soldiers are to expand the beachhead God has already won in Christ.\textsuperscript{286} But Martyn does not pursue any of these theories. To be sure, the Scriptures make it clear that the victory has been won in Christ, but the appropriation of it must still be undertaken and this will not be without resistance, hence Paul’s requirement in Ephesians 6, that each soldier must put on the armour of God and be properly arrayed for battle. While Martyn offers little to embrace here, this dissertation will, in its consideration of the nature and activity of the Kingdom of God.

\textsuperscript{283} John 19:30.
\textsuperscript{284} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{285} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 102.
\textsuperscript{286} Ibid, 103.
8. Introduction to the Kingdom of God

The narrative of Scripture, already spoken about in this dissertation, allows one to conclude that God does not get His greatest joy from having to remove us or bypass us and then bring His glory by Himself. The highlight of His story is when His glory can be seen in His sons and daughters and when that glory causes them to arise and shine. Two examples in the Old Testament are,

Psalm 2:8
Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

Isaiah 60:1-3
Arise, shine; for your light has come,
And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness will cover the earth
And deep darkness the peoples;
But the LORD will rise upon you
And His glory will appear upon you.
Nations will come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Jesus obviously shares the same joy, made evident by the importance of the role He gave to His disciples.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; (Matthew 5:14-15).
God is always seeking for His sons and daughters to co-labour with Him to reveal His glory and His purpose(s) to the world. This is done in the name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit and its vehicle of expression is the Kingdom of God which we will now explore.

The term “Kingdom of God” does not appear in the Scriptures until the New Testament - but after researching the New Testament writings, the idea of it should come to the forefront as we consider the created order. As the Old Testament unfolds, this kingdom is progressively revealed mostly (although not exclusively) through the biblical covenants, which have already been discussed. As the New Testament begins, it uses the Old Testament background as the basis for its teaching on the kingdom. Without this, contrary to the opinion of Martyn, the New Covenant has no foundation. The physical genealogical link from the Abrahamic Covenant is transformed, as the Old Testament itself anticipates, to the dawning of a regenerate people from every nation who become the “one new man” in Christ Jesus the Lord.287 Both Jew and Gentile are joined together in fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise.288 One of the key elements of the change that came with the New Covenant was that all of God’s people, from the least to the most important could now truly know Him as Lord and Father.289 As His people enter this relationship and worship Him as servant-kings, becoming completely devoted and

287 Ephesians 2:11-21.
288 Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom Through Covenant, 608.
289 Matthew 5:45.
fully obedient to Him in every domain of life, God’s rule is extended throughout the life of the covenant community, into the entire created order.290

With this New Covenant, comes God’s forgiveness of sin. Because they were no longer imprisoned by sin, The Law could now be written on the hearts of those in Christ. Being cleansed and equipped in this way (by God’s grace) they could experience all that is promised in the New Covenant. It is in this context that the statement is made that “The Law and the prophets are until John: from that time the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached.”291 As a result of Jesus’ sacrifice, the sins of humankind have been dealt with once for all292 and humanity is ready for a brand-new era. But this is not, as Martyn argues, one that is disconnected from the past - on the contrary - despite being brand new, it is very reliant upon what has gone before it. Hebrews 8 provides useful insights on the interrelationship between the old and new covenants. An examination of this passage indicates that God’s progressive revelation of His covenants is the determining, controlling concept between the testaments.293 This provides a further reason for this dissertation to be in dispute with Martyn, whose view requires a complete disconnect with all that has gone on in the past. What is not in dispute, as the letter to the Hebrews reveals,294 is that because Jesus’ ministry is heavenly and unlimited,

290 Ibid, 594.
291 Geerhardus Vos, The Kingdom of God and the Church, 15.
292 Psalm 103:8-12.
293 Vos, The Kingdom of God and the Church, 15.
294 Hebrews 8:1-5.
it is superior to that of the Moses, the Levitical priests and all those who have gone before. The Saviour, as the mediator between God and humanity,\textsuperscript{295} has inaugurated a new and better covenant than the old one which had as its base the Mosaic law. The new covenant is better, precisely because it is established on better promises.\textsuperscript{296} As DeSilva noted,

\begin{quote}
Jesus is the focal point, the lens through which the light of God’s favour and promises come into focus and shine out to humanity.\textsuperscript{297}
\end{quote}

The writer of Hebrews argued that if the first covenant had sufficiently met the needs of the people and had adequately provided for their salvation, then there would have been no need for a new covenant to replace it.\textsuperscript{298} Martyn correctly states that the old covenant was insufficient and inadequate in bringing people to God, and therefore a new covenant had to be established. As should be obvious from the earlier writings of this thesis, the reason for the shortfall of the previous covenants, was not the covenants themselves, but those living under them. It is true that God initiated the former covenants with His people, but they willingly agreed to it,\textsuperscript{299} making it a mutual obligation between them and God. But because the people constantly failed to live up to their part, God was now compelled to come and fulfil the promise Himself.\textsuperscript{300} This was manifested by the coming of the

\textsuperscript{295} 1 Timothy 2:5.
\textsuperscript{296} Hebrews 8:6.
\textsuperscript{298} Hebrews 8:7.
\textsuperscript{299} cf. Joshua 24.
\textsuperscript{300} Hebrews 8.
Messiah, His Son Jesus Christ. The New Testament announces that through the Calvary experience, death has been destroyed.\footnote{1 Corinthians 15:55.}

Thus, through Jesus’ obedient life and cross work, He inaugurated the Kingdom of God over which He now rules and reigns. Although it is already here its fulfilment is yet to come, meaning there is a “not yet” aspect to it, since it awaits its consummation in Christ’s second coming. Describing this George Eldon Ladd (1911-1982), coined the phrase (although not completely original) of the “now and not yet kingdom.”\footnote{Ladd, George E., \textit{A Theology of The New Testament} (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1987), 57.} To use his words,

\begin{quote}
The Kingdom of God is likened to a seed which is being sown in the hearts of men, not in the future, but now (Mark 4:3 ff). When Jesus said to a scribe that he was not far from the Kingdom of God (Mark 12:34), he must have referred to something that was present and not future. The kingdom is like a treasure which men can find, a pearl the possession of which men can now acquire (Matthew. 13:44-46).\footnote{Ladd, George E., \textit{Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1952), 49.}
\end{quote}

He further states,

\begin{quote}
To insist that the spiritual reign of Christ, the present inner aspect of God’s kingdom, is the entirety of the kingdom and thereby to deny a future glorious manifestation, is to make as one-sided an emphasis as to insist that the kingdom is nothing but a future earthly reign of Christ and has no present spiritual reality.
\end{quote}
Both the present and the future are included in the fullness of the revelation of God’s kingly power.\textsuperscript{304} Ladd argued that the Kingdom of God was central to New Testament theology and that it represented,

the sovereign rule of God, manifested in the person and work of Christ, creating a people over whom He reigns, and issuing a realm or realms in which the power of His reign is realised.\textsuperscript{305}

Ladd went on to state that the true Kingdom of God is the history of redemption and that God had always been directing the historical process of redeeming His people. Again, we have another influential twentieth century theologian (Ladd), endorsing the vital role that history has played in the ongoing work of the Kingdom of God, and that Martyn’s invasion does not negate this. This kingdom could not be contained in any one place, era or dispensation - rather it was the very power of God intervening in all of human history to save all wayward people.\textsuperscript{306} In this sense it is not the result of the Incarnation “invasion” alone - it is an ongoing movement throughout human history. D.A. Carson puts this well when he contrasts what has become available to the people of God through the inauguration of this kingdom. He states,

\begin{quote}
If the Old Testament prophets constantly look forward to the day when God will act decisively, the New Testament writers announce that God has acted decisively, and that this is “good news,” gospel, of universal, eternal significance and stellar
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{304} Ibid, 117.
\textsuperscript{305} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{306} Ibid, 64-80.

112
importance. Thus kingdom, Christology, eschatology, church, gospel, become dominant terms or themes…

Without a doubt, as made clear with Ladd’s comment about the “now and not yet kingdom” there is an eschatological aspect to the Kingdom of God that must not be minimised. As it invades the present it makes a declaration (as Martyn covers well) that a new future has already begun and is offered to all humanity. This eschatological dimension in the present and the future is drawn out most forcefully in the Gospel of John. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore the subject of eschatology any further, or the expression of the kingdom in the book of John, except to make the statement that John made it very clear in chapter seventeen that Christ’s concern was to ensure His followers went out into the world with His mission, faith and power, concerning themselves with the work of the Kingdom of God that Jesus had begun with His inauguration of this kingdom. There is no dispute with Martyn and others, that the inauguration of this kingdom can be considered to be invasive. Its coming is nothing less than the great divine break-through, as Isaiah stated, the rending of the heavens, the commencement of the operation of the divine *dunamis*. It is absolutely transcendent in its origin

309 John 17:15-18.
310 Isaiah 64:1.
311 Mark 9:1.
being the revelation of God’s glory. Its coming consists entirely in God’s own action and is perfectly dependent on His activity. It is not a state or society created by humanity - humans do not prepare it for God. But this must not suggest that there is no part here for humanity to play or to have played.

When speaking of this new creation or age, what Martyn does not discuss is how this is to be established, leaving one to assume he would suggest it would be via further invasions? When teaching on community, which Martyn stresses the importance of, the writer of Ephesians teaches that it is something that must be built up until it attains to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the son of God, with the intention of coming into the fullness of Christ.

Paul states that he himself, and those who come after him, must be about the work of building on the foundation that has already been laid. As the New Testament writings reveal, this will require a labour, of love, steadfastness, suffering and patience. This is definitely consistent with what is referred to as the Great Commission commanded by Christ and calls us to an ongoing work of service until the end of the age - admittedly made possible by His “invasion” and including the

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312 Matthew 16:27; 24:30; Mark 8:38; 13:26.
313 Herman Ridderbos, The Coming of the Kingdom (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1962) 19.
315 1 Corinthians 3:10.
316 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Timothy 4:10; 2 Timothy 2:3.
coming and empowering of the Holy Spirit. As incredible as this is, it still requires a subsequent outworking to bring the revelation and understanding that God was endeavouring to impart, into play. It is clear that Paul is expecting the work of the church to be impacted, not only by the invasive action of the Holy Spirit but also by an ongoing, progressive continuance of fellowship, faith sharing and establishment of the church, over a period of time. This again reveals how the nature of the Gospel is not just fostered by the force of “invasion” but also requires careful planning and deliberation from person to person and generation to generation in order to maintain and grow its vision. What Paul is clearly trying to portray here, is a progressive ongoing movement and church that will contribute greatly to the biblical history narrative.

The doctrine of the Kingdom of God teaches that the kingdom is related to a great system of objective, supernatural facts and transactions, many that humanity must enter into with God. It is the treasure in the field for which a man sells all that he has in order to purchase it - it is the pearl of great price that all desire and the great dragnet for catching fish.\(^{317}\) Its coming amongst us is the very basis on which Jesus preached His sermon on the Mount\(^{318}\) saying that nothing need be the same any more. It is a call not only of hope to come but of taking action today - reflected in His naming the church the Ecclesia, which designates the assembly of free citizens

\(^{318}\) Matthew chapters 5-7.
called together to deliberate and take action in matters pertaining to the commonwealth. The church forms an intermediate link between the present life and the life of eternity.\textsuperscript{319} This reflects how the Messiah is related to both God and man, and as the representative of Yahweh he is the instrument of His rule.\textsuperscript{320}

The Good News is that there is now a new kingdom, a new age or creation, that all humans may participate in. The Apostle Paul offers a very succinct description of the kingdom when he states,

\begin{quote}
for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).
\end{quote}

Although this kingdom is destined to operate on earth\textsuperscript{321} it is totally God-centred and He is the supreme and controlling factor of it. This requires us to consider the whole of the world and all of life from the point of view of their subservience to the glory of God.\textsuperscript{322} Its supreme commandment is to love God with all one’s heart, soul, strength and mind, followed by the commandment to love one’s neighbour as oneself.\textsuperscript{323} As we learnt in the above study of Daniel, this kingdom will not tolerate any kingdom set up by humanity, without God. It comes with an expression of power, produced through the Holy Spirit and made manifest in the many miracles, signs and wonders, demonstrating that this kingdom had arrived. This gives

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{319} Vos, \textit{The Kingdom of God and the Church}, 97.
\item \textsuperscript{320} G. R. Beasley-Murray, \textit{Jesus and the Kingdom of God} (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 23.
\item \textsuperscript{321} John 3:12.
\item \textsuperscript{322} Vos, \textit{The Kingdom of God and the Church}, 55.
\item \textsuperscript{323} Mark 12:23-24.
\end{itemize}
evidence that the royal power of God, which will revolutionise heaven and earth, is now in motion.\textsuperscript{324} When John the Baptist questioned if Jesus was really the Messiah, Jesus replied with,

Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them (Luke 7:20-22).

However, there is even more to the kingdom than this. In their daily walk of life, its adherents were required to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect\textsuperscript{325} and to let their light shine in such a way their good works reflect the Father.\textsuperscript{326} Such requirements far exceed the dead letter of The Law. They require an accurate portrayal of the Father’s heart in all matters. Obviously, this is not possible unless one is empowered by the Holy Spirit, a point the Apostle Paul emphasises by comparing the failures and frustrations of a pre-Holy Spirit life in Romans 7 to a victorious life empowered by the Holy Spirit in Romans 8. As this Kingdom was the essence of the life of Christ, Jesus calls on His people to make it theirs also, availing themselves to its mission and its power. Speaking of this Paul states, “For the Kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power”.\textsuperscript{327} This is to say that the followers of Christ, as participants in a new mode of existence associated with the future age, are now partakers of the power of the “age to come.” Although we

\textsuperscript{324} Ibid, 61.  
\textsuperscript{325} Matthew 5:48.  
\textsuperscript{326} Matthew 5:16.  
\textsuperscript{327} 1 Corinthians 4:20.
have the “first fruits” here now, we also look forward to the final consummation of this Kingdom of God, when we shall enjoy these blessings to the full. As well as being a sovereign act of God to right the wrongs of the past from a heavenly perspective, Jesus considered the Kingdom of God as the greatest conceivable blessing to humanity. This can be clearly seen by His comment in Matthew 35:34 where He says those blessed by the Father (i.e. those who find this kingdom on earth) will enter that which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Obviously further mention could be made of the power over the kingdom of darkness, the freedom from the lusts of the Babylonian system that rules this fallen world, the power to endure suffering and temptation, the great concept of sonship with the Father and the ability to fully embrace the Way of the Lord.

But the point should now be clear - that upon entering the kingdom, we become a partaker of the power and presence of God that becomes part of the momentum of the Kingdom of God as predicted by Daniel (Daniel 2:44). Otto describes this action well by saying,

> It is the Kingdom of God as an eschatological sphere of salvation, which breaks in, makes a small unpretentious beginning, miraculously swells, and increases, as a divine “field of energy” it extends and expands ever farther.

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330 Matt 6:14; John 16:33; Col 1:22; 2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:14; Mark 1:2.
331 This is not just limited to the Church. The kingdom gathers up all sorts of expressions from all of humanity.
This is not just limited to the life or role of the Church. The momentum of the Kingdom of God gathers up all sorts of expressions and actions from the systems and people of the world and uses them to express the glory of God. However, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus, the Kingdom of God, despite being amongst us, is hidden and it takes revelation to see it.\textsuperscript{333} For this reason it is often called the invisible realm because it is the power of God working in Jesus’ absence in anticipation of His visible return and rule.\textsuperscript{334} This is not to suggest that there is any absenteeism on the part of the Godhead. Jesus is the head and the Church are His body; working in harmony with Him as directed by the person of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{335} Throughout the ages, the kingdom remains the sovereign expression of the rule and reign of God. After introducing the Kingdom of God to this realm and an intense time of ministry including miracles, signs and wonders, Jesus announces to His disciples that He will be going away for a while and that during this period His disciples should concern themselves with being faithful stewards.\textsuperscript{336} This was mostly in response to their view that the final event of the Kingdom of God was near.

The subsequent parable in Luke 19 gives a clear illustration on personal responsibility and accountability, basically around the expectation that they would

\begin{footnotes}
\item[334] Darrell L. Bock, in \textit{Looking Into the Future}, 17.
\item[335] Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18; Romans 5:5; 8:4; 8:11.
\item[336] Glasser, \textit{Announcing the Kingdom}, 195.
\end{footnotes}
take what they had been given and bring increase to it, until the time of His return. Without going further into all the nuances of the parable, an obvious conclusion to draw is that all the people of God can be fruitfully involved in the ongoing mission of the Kingdom of God. God faithfully rewards even the least that people do to further His mission. But it also comes with a warning - those who fail to contribute are punished as the summary of the parable of the minas states,

I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. (Luke 19:26).

Other Lukan parables make similar points. Of further interest is the parable of the labourers described by Matthew in chapter twenty. It is revealed here that it is a privilege to be hired by God and something all should aspire to. Also, that even those who join at the very late stages of the “day” will be rewarded. The point being made here is that not only is there work to be done, as a result of the coming of the Kingdom of God, but that He insists all His people should be about this work, making it the main focus of their life, even above earning their own living and concern for their own essential provisions of life.\(^{337}\)

Having given an overview of the Kingdom of God we must now return to the argument that we have been pursuing - that Martyn overlooks an important part of the planned strategy of the Godhead, which is to provide a testimony and witness

\(^{337}\) Matthew chapters 5-7.
through His people, the Church, of discipling the nations. Such a witness is aligned with, and indeed is part of, the afore-mentioned ongoing power of the Kingdom of God. Martyn discounts this, by saying that the previous time has come to a “clean end.” This puts him at odds with any notion that the Kingdom of God, as this dissertation argues, has an ongoing momentum of its own, revealed from the beginning to the end.

Contrary to Martyn, this dissertation has already proposed that Jesus, in His first coming, has inaugurated a present and future Kingdom of God, made not with human hands, that is contrasted with the kingdoms of men as we have noted from Daniel 2 and 7. What was hoped for in the times of old, and was revealed in the past only as a mere glimpse of what had been promised, was a time of rule, where the Messiah would come and bring total peace for God’s people. Judaism held a basic understanding that the kingdom did exist and although Jesus drew on this imagery (as seen in Judaism) for His general portrait of the kingdom, He also added new imagery to that portrait. His teaching stressed where the kingdom was headed in the future. The sheer number of texts that discuss judgment and vindication under this theme both in Scripture and in later Judaism show that Jesus works from a given understanding of its base. Jesus takes the kingdom concept and uses it as a

338 Ephesians 3:10.
339 Martyn, Galatians, 104.
340 Genesis 1 - Revelation 22.
collection point for both soteriology and eschatology. It was on this basis that
Jesus preached His message of hope - that “the Kingdom of God is now amongst
you.” During His time on earth, Jesus developed the concept along additional
lines from what the Old Testament taught. He is not altering the concept, but
developing and complementing it. The destiny of the kingdom is to lead up to a
time when God would vindicate His people through the Son of Man and judge the
nations. But this is what Ladd calls the “not yet.” Jesus refused to predict the time
of the end and nor did He preach imminence in such a way as to declare it would
come within the generation of the disciples (a point that is often misunderstood).
Signs in their lifetime did and would indicate its approach, but the times and
seasons for its coming were known only to the Father leaving the current time as
what Ladd called “the now.”

As a result, it is certainly feasible to claim that it is God’s kingdom and rule that is
presented as the hope for the world and that this very kingdom is active now,
primarily, but certainly not limited to, the expression of those who are in Christ. It
is conceded, that those who claim for tangible evidence of this may be
disappointed. Addressing this very issue, Jesus stated that,

Ibid.
Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the Kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, “The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’

For behold, the Kingdom of God is in your midst.” (Luke 17:20-21).

This is not to assume there is no evidence. It is just that it is not seen in the places most people would look for it. One of the key evidences of the Kingdom of God is the process of transformation. Speaking to this John Fuellenbach states,

The thrust of all the parables, is therefore, directly toward transforming action aimed at changing the present situation, and as a result, the world at large. What really drives the individual to action is the “joy” over the unexpected treasure, the great blessing of salvation, the experience of God’s gracious giving that transforms life.345

J. D. Crossan agrees by stating,

The parables of Jesus seek to draw us into the present of the Kingdom. They then challenge us to act and to live in accordance with the gratuitous experience.346

In regard to Martyn, one could be forgiven for reading a complete dismissal of this in his work. It may be argued that Christ only specifically invades a person’s heart once, at the moment of that person being born again, and that all future transformation is the ongoing miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, that is part of the process of sanctification. Indeed, a study of Paul’s writings would tend to

support this. In Romans 6 he talks about a believer being baptised into Christ’s (once only) death; raised into the likeness of His resurrection; and as a result, walking into this newness of life. Although this is clearly impossible without first experiencing an “invasion” of the Holy Spirit,\textsuperscript{347} it then requires an ongoing process of transformation as Paul describes in Second Corinthians where he says that,

\begin{quote}
we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).
\end{quote}

I would argue that this very process, along with other processes Martyn mentions, such as “creating a loving community” or “New Creation”\textsuperscript{348} are all better described under the heading of transformation than they are under the heading of invasion. What this dissertation has argued obviously begs the question, if the Christian journey is based on a process of invasions, what does one do in the meantime or the time between invasions? This question would become more apparent in Martyn’s interpretation of the role of the Holy Spirit, made particularly clear in his comments on Galatians 5.

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\textsuperscript{347} John 3:5.  
\textsuperscript{348} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 132.
When commenting on V16 which states, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh”, Martyn claims that, contrary to many commentators’ views, Paul is not setting out a doctrine here of two different ways of life. Nor, he argues, is Paul speaking to humanity in general but is instead addressing the Galatian communities specifically, as churches that are being spoken to or addressed by, the Holy Spirit. As a result, Martyn claims, this statement is a description of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit who has been sent amongst the Galatians, rather than a description or requirement of a wider Christian life. It seems Martyn really goes out on a limb here because such a statement is contrary to most modern-day interpretations, particularly in the evangelical world. Speaking on this topic Gordon Fee states that this is Paul’s basic ethical imperative. Fee justifies this by stating that to walk in the ways of God is Paul’s most common word to describe or urge ethical behaviour and is what Jewish understanding of ethics is all about. It is actually calling upon the people to walk in the ways of God by using the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

This same topic comes up again in Romans 8, where it is emphasised that the flesh leads to death whereas the Spirit offers resurrection life. The conflict between the two (flesh and spirit) is a tension that will remain as long as humans are in

349 Ibid, 534.
351 Ibid. The verb “to walk” occurs 17 times in the corpus with this ethical intent.
352 cf. 8:5-9, 12f.
mortal bodies and can be separated from their life in Christ. There is no doubt that Paul is speaking directly to the Galatian church, evidenced by the use of the pronoun “you.” However, if such a restraint was allowed here, confining the instructions only to the audience that was addressed at the time, not only would this negate Paul’s letters from being used universally, it would also do the same to other New Testament writers. Therefore, such a theory must be dismissed. It is true, as Martyn states, that the old age has gone and humanity has been liberated by the invasion of the Spirit of Christ - but now the work starts. This cannot remain static, hoping for or waiting upon further invasions, which may or may not happen. It is now up to the recipients of this invasion to take up their cross and follow Jesus in order to adequately express what this invasion has made possible in a fallen world.

This can be seen again in a topic Martyn devotes some time too - the aforementioned Jerusalem Conference (described in Acts 15). The main outcome was an agreement that the Antioch church should pursue its circumcision-free mission to the Gentiles. As a result of this outcome, Martyn makes an assessment that for Paul, the history of the gospel is the story of the repeated presence of God as He causes the gospel to progress victoriously into the world of enslavement. He goes on to claim that this was an episode in which the truth of the advancing

gospel was preserved for the Galatians. He (Martyn) sees this as God’s ever-new activity.\footnote{Ibid.} It could be considered ironic that Martyn pursues this line of thought as it presents evidence that the Gospel is progressive in its own right and has the power to move forward as mentioned in Daniel 2:44. This cannot be put under the heading of “invasion.” To be sure, without the invasion (the advent of Christ), this would not be possible. But, this outcome requires an ongoing momentum to bring transformation to a fallen world. Indeed, Martyn himself states that for Paul, the announcement of God’s good news in Christ, without any presupposition, was the point from which began all thinking and practice in the church.\footnote{Ibid, 508.} Describing this as “practice” implies that actions must now follow the invasion that has taken place.

What Paul is clearly trying to build here, is a progressive ongoing movement and church that will create its own history, a history of course, that is consistent with the wider narrative of Scripture, one led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This brings us to the next topic where it will be argued that participation with Christ in what is best known as “Mission” being a primary part of the Kingdom of God, is the real purpose for which Christ came to earth. This is something a study of Martyn’s book finds little if any mention of. His references to “mission” are primarily used to describe the argument between Paul and the Teachers over

\footnote{Ibid.} \footnote{Ibid, 508.}
whether the demands of the Galatian churches should include circumcision; the role of The Law and the inclusion of the Gentiles.\textsuperscript{357} Outside of these discussions no mission is given as a requirement of the people going forward, revealing again, his perception that neither history, nor the future offer little hope to the people of Christ.

What I wish to argue here, as repeatedly inferred throughout this dissertation, is that the action of the kingdom will continue to advance in history to all parts of the world, through the sovereign and creative activity of God. Although it is important to understand that this is God’s Kingdom not mans, and that there is nothing anyone can do to hasten or control this kingdom (as shown by Daniel in portraying it as a stone cut out without hands),\textsuperscript{358} we must embrace the mandate that it does bring to God’s people which is for them to devote their time, hearts, strength and resources to proclaim and demonstrate or bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{359}

In support of this Paul Loffler notes

\begin{quote}
The beginning of the Kingdom through Christ’s entry into the human history is the main context of conversion in the New Testament…His criteria are not the saving on one’s soul nor the increase of church membership \textit{as such}, but rather the mission and ministry of the Church in the world.\textsuperscript{360}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{358} Daniel 2:34.
\textsuperscript{359} Glasser, \textit{Announcing the Kingdom}, 36.
Jim Wallis adds to this with the following comment,

The goal of Biblical conversion is not to save souls, apart from history but to bring the Kingdom of God into the world with explosive force. It begins with individuals but is for the sake of the world… Churches today are tragically split between those who stress conversion but have forgotten its goal, and this who emphasise Christian social action but have forgotten the necessity for conversion… Both need to recover the original meaning of conversion to Jesus Christ and to his Kingdom.361

So, understanding that all activity or mission, in Christ, from the coming of the Holy Spirit on, should be consistent with the message of the Kingdom of God, we will now look further at what this call to Mission really means.

9. The Call to Mission

Karl Barth states,

To be with Christ is to take part in His history, so that in His history that of the community and all its members has already happened, and has therefore to find in His history its model and pattern, to see itself again in it; the result being that the community and its members necessarily cease to be what they are if they are guilty of any arbitrary deviation from His history. This “with Christ” determines their past and present and future; their whole history.362


362 Karl Barth, CD IV/2:277.

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The church’s call to mission is made in and for Christ. As His bride she is empowered by the Holy Spirit as the active agent in guiding the lives of her participants with revelatory proclamation.\textsuperscript{363} This Spirit is the same Holy Spirit who sustained Jesus in the doing of His Father’s will even unto the point of suffering and death. Today He sustains the church as it seeks to live in accord with the indicative - with what is.\textsuperscript{364} Christian life is a matter of living “a human life of divine character” in something like the way Jesus did. What is qualitatively different is that the Spirit is Jesus’ by nature, whereas it is given to, or attained by anyone else via His grace. That aside, walking or living by the Spirit does not mean the abandonment of one’s own efforts. Rather the Spirit directs each person’s life as they attempt to direct their own. Therefore, the Christian mission, this dissertation contends, is to carry on with the work as an ongoing expression of the ever forward moving Kingdom of God.

Earlier, in the review of Martyn’s work, I made mention of the fact that Martyn sees that no remedy is possible for the human situation outside of the invasion of God.\textsuperscript{365} He interprets Paul as announcing an actual “turn of the ages” where an “invasion” of the course of this world has taken place, offering no backward or continued forward development.\textsuperscript{366} As a result he allows no room for the

\textsuperscript{363} Holmes, in \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 220.
\textsuperscript{364} Ibid, 225.
\textsuperscript{365} This was based on a quote of Martyn’s in \textit{Paul and the Apocalyptic Imagination} eds. Blackwell, Goodrich, Maston (Minneapolis: Fortress Press: 2016), 32.
\textsuperscript{366} Christopher Morse in \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 146.
transformation of society both present and future. This is made clear in his comment that we prefaced earlier in regard to his bifocal vision. The point copied from Martyn was that the evil powers of the earth hold significant power and cannot be overcome except by invasion.\(^{367}\) If this invasion stopped at that point it would surely mean a degree of impotence for those in Christ. Martyn’s point is valid and well-made when he says,

> God would not have to carry out an invasion in order merely to forgive human beings. The root trouble lies deeper than human guilt, and it is more sinister. The whole of humanity - indeed, the whole of creation (3:22) - is, in fact, trapped, enslaved under the power of the present evil age.\(^{368}\)

But, in the understanding of the Kingdom of God as per Daniel 2:44 and the teaching of Christ, this requires more than what Martyn conveys. It must develop the message of the Incarnation which calls those in Christ to transform from one degree of glory to another.\(^{369}\) and, coming back to Galatians, to become sons by embracing the works of the Father in Christ.\(^{370}\) The Apostle Paul has a lot more to say about this. A constant theme in his letters is about being “in Christ” and according to Albert Schweitzer this must be grasped to appreciate the whole of his works.\(^{371}\) A close study of this reveals that Paul’s focus is frequently on Christ’s human characteristics suggesting that the crucifixion is bound up in the human as


\(^{368}\) Martyn, *Galatians*, 105.

\(^{369}\) 2 Corinthians 3:18.

\(^{370}\) Galatians 4:1-7.

well as the divine identity of the Crucified One. What is the point here? Simply that the Incarnation is very significant for humanity and is intended to empower the people of God for expressions of the Kingdom of God. This is indicated in Romans when Paul states,

For what The Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of The Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4).

Speaking on this passage Robert Tannehill says that it

[R]eveals an important presupposition of Paul’s gospel about Jesus’ saving death. God has sent God’s Son to participate in the human plight. The Son is sent ‘in likeness of flesh of sin,’ which makes possible effective actions against sin and a new kind of life for believers. In other words, atonement for sin presupposes the prior divine action of sending God’s Son to participate in the human situation, an act in which the Son identifies with humanity in its need.

The point being emphasised here is that those in Christ are called to take up the role that He commenced on earth, while He takes up His seat at the right hand of the Father. Speaking on this very subject Jesus said,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father (John 14:12).

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Paul went to some extremes to get this very point across and many commentators refer to it as some form of exchange or interchange in Christ that transfers His powers to His people to enable them to continue with His works. Eastman talks more about this and actually reverses the theory Martyn posits in regard to the Calvary experience. Her view, which sees much more consistent with the emphasis placed on this matter by Paul than Martyn’s, is framed up under the heading of “participatory redemption” (or rectification to use Martyn’s preferred word). She talks of two phases here. The first being that Christ’s union with sinful humanity allows Him to absorb the judgment that brought condemnation on all humanity. Martyn would certainly agree with this. Eastman then further describes the Calvary experience as not that of a believer moving into Christ through faith, but that of Christ movement into human dereliction, providing her “participatory redemption” which is that of engaging the human being in the works that he began. She claims this is where the “real bite” of Paul’s theology lies. Käseman supports this belief. Speaking of Paul’s concept of “in Christ” Käsemann identifies this as being the state of those who are “called out of the old world.” But then he quickly adds that this is not a call to a separate spiritual realm, but to discipleship in service of Christ who has joined Himself with the ungodly. My attempt here is to provide

\[\text{For example, 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13-14; 4:4-5; Romans 8:3.}\]
\[\text{Examples used of Calvin, Hooker, Tanehill and Eastman in } \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 169.\]
\[\text{Eastman in } \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 169-176.\]
\[\text{Ibid, 176.}\]
\[\text{Ibid, 178.}\]
evidence supporting the claim of this dissertation that among other things, the Gospel is a call to salvation that requires its followers to become an expression of the Kingdom of God in both word and deed - a view Martyn gives no room for. In fact, his view would suggest that any suggested activity would be in vain. Instead, Martyn claims, the stronghold of the demonic or evil powers, in and over the cosmos, rivals God’s power and as such, according to Belcher, this could almost suggest that they pose a viable threat to God. Martyn posits that God challenges this authority only by divine invasion, which produces a dualistic set up where on one hand Christ wins a resounding victory on the cross over the anti-God powers, but they continue to reign victorious over the ongoing previous age. Obviously, there is some truth in this. Although defeated, the enemy is still at large, until the final return of Christ and until then he is able to go about “as a roaring lion.” However, those in Christ have been given clear authority over this enemy and are no longer subject to him despite being in the world.

Continuing his comments on warfare, Martyn posits that this has exacerbated remarkably with the dawn of the new age. On a personal level he speaks about the war between the flesh and the Spirit, as Paul covers in Galatians 6, but beyond

379 Belcher, in Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 251.
380 Ibid.
381 1 Peter 5:8.
384 Martyn, Galatians, 100.
this he does not attribute a wider scale of warfare, such as satanic forces opposing the Kingdom of God, as something the church should engage in. He makes similar statements in his other books. In his work on the letters of Paul, Martyn states that the members of the church are,

…newly enrolled soldiers called into the obedience of faith and sent into warfare in which God is regrasping the world for Himself.  

The role here, Martyn argues, is that they gain the fruit of following the invading God: becoming a church that enacts God’s “genuine love and powerful grace in the midst of Adam’s desperate children.” Again we see here, that Martyn endorses a strategy of warfare that allows little more for the church than the role of following God when He moves. Is this consistent with the teaching of Jesus and other New Testament authors? Certainly, there is a clear warning in the Scriptures, as narrated in the book of Acts that no person should not attempt to engage in this warfare in his or her own power or strength. One should also acknowledge that any war in “the heavenly realm” must be waged by God for humanity, not a conflict waged by humanity for God.

However, the people of God are clearly involved in spiritual warfare and in the early days of their training Jesus sent His disciples out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease

385 Martyn Theological Issues, 65.
386 Ibid, 287.
and sickness, proclaiming that such signs are the evidence that the Kingdom of God is at hand.\textsuperscript{388} The discourse in John 14 endorses this. The impact that this will eventually have upon the manifestation of the purposes of God is spoken clearly in Ephesians (underlining added).

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, (Ephesians 3:8-11).

Despite the cautions given here this does allow a very significant role for the body of Christ to play, one that Martyn makes little allowance for, preferring instead to place the full initiative of this belonging to the invasion(s) of God.\textsuperscript{389}

Martyn states that those in Christ are both enslaved to the anti-God powers as well as being part of a new human agency brought about by God’s apocalypse. This dichotomy is described by Martyn as an existence that consists of being “morally incompetent,” powerless agents while also being a new “corporate,” morally “competent,” and “addressable” agent in whom the Spirit of God is active.\textsuperscript{390} If this

\textsuperscript{388} Matthew 10.
\textsuperscript{389} Beverly Gaventa, in Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 198.
is true there is obviously little incentive for the body of Christ to take up the role that has been given to them to take the gospel of the kingdom into the whole world as a testimony to all the nations.

In sympathy to this negative view, Robert Jensen argues that the New Testament does not at all furnish the faithful with any template for a continuing theological work. Martyn holds the same view, ironically so because he freely acknowledges that his own work is “indebted above all to the works” of the great twentieth century pastor, exegete and theologian Ernst Käsemann. Yet it was Käsemann himself who stated,

The earth is only liberated from enmity and chaos and made a new creation in so far as the service of Christ is carried on in her [the church] …to bear the divine work to a world which God has not forsaken.

Throughout his work, Käsemann made efforts to prescribe a mission that needed to be pursued by the body of Christ. It could be argued that Martyn is somewhat trapped here by his own interpretation of “bifocal vision” which has been outlined previously in the review of his book. Martyn describes this bifocal vision as a dual perspective through which those in Christ “see both the enslaving Old Age and God’s invading and liberating new creation” simultaneously. The New Age does not need renewing, and the Old Age is beyond redemption., a view this

391 Matthew 24:14.
392 Robert Jenson in Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 155.
395 A brief but worthwhile account of this is given by Christopher Holmes in Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology, 219-234.
396 Martyn, Galatians, 104.
dissertation argues is contrary to the Kingdom of God and the mission the Church has been given.

So, what does the mission of the church look like? Before embarking upon this journey, it is wise to consider the caution given from Fleming Rutledge that too often we talk about the Kingdom of God with the predominant notion that the church is “building the kingdom” with itself as the active agent.\textsuperscript{397} This view greatly overstates the role the church has been given in regard to the Kingdom of God. However, another caution should be raised here. Taking Fleming’s criticism too far can result in a further problem - the act of dividing God and man in their divine roles and the failure to consider the kingdom’s own forward momentum as per Daniel 2:44. All these roles must be held in tension. The role of the Godhead, including its invasive action that Martyn describes so well, is vital, along with the role of the church empowered by the Holy Spirit during the church age, and the ongoing momentum of the Kingdom of God. All such actions will contribute towards the ultimate return of Christ at the end of the age. A challenge here is that this activity and any assessment of its progress may not be easily seen, a comment that seemed to be endorsed by Jesus in a verse we have already looked at,

\begin{quote}
The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the Kingdom of God is in your midst (Luke 17:20-21).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{397} Fleming Rutledge in \textit{Apocalyptic and the Future of Theology}, 306.
This is a most interesting statement. Having established that the kingdom is a present reality, Jesus now attempts to bring the present and the future together by describing that its promised future coming, will be at a time not known and will not be predictable in advance by means of signs.\footnote{Luke 17:20-30.} It is a huge mistake though, to make these two verses the starting point for an understanding of the kingdom. Many expository comments on these two verses do exactly that, ignoring the evidence given primarily by Jesus that the kingdom is definitely here\footnote{Mark 1:15.} and that it is not just a “religious” blessing. The well-known sermon on the mount and the teachings that followed in Matthew 5-7, make it clear that this kingdom is God’s way of addressing the social, political and earthly needs, that require the asserting of His rights and His will for justice over creation.\footnote{Benedict T. Vivano, The Kingdom of God in History, (Wilmington, Del: Micheal Glazier, 1988), 27.} These methods must be applied into the present reality.

What does it mean then to say that this kingdom is amongst us? Is its presence so totally hidden that it will always seem as though it is not there? If so how could we be assured that it is? As we look out into the world today do we see justice, peace and joy realised in the world. Those watching the six-o-clock news would surely say “no.” Martin Buber puts up an argument that seems to endorse this. He says,

> According to my faith it is not the case that the Messiah has appeared in a definite moment of history but his appearance can only mark the end of history. In the

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399 Mark 1:15.
perspective of my faith, the redemption of the world did not happen nineteen
centuries ago. On the contrary, we still live in an unredeemed world.401

Rudolph Bultmann agreed. He said,

The train may be near and the rain may be falling over there, but the platform of
the station is still empty and the soil on which we stand is still dry.402

Martyn brings a different perspective to this debate in regard to his bifocal vision
that we have already discussed. His view is that the two ages are running
concurrently with one another and that bifocal vision is required to be able to see
both the old age and God’s invading new age.403 Although I have argued that the
Kingdom of God has invaded the “old age” I would accept that the old age or fallen
humanity is still clearly demonstrated whereas the Kingdom of God can only be
seen by revelation or better, by faith. Fuellenbach presents a better argument by
stating that believers need to use the image of their single and bifocal vision in
order that they can perceive the kingdom at work, as well as the counter-forces that
try to overcome it.404

Despite the fact of whether one can see it or not, the Scriptures give much evidence
of the fact that the kingdom has arrived and how this is evidenced. Not only does
it describe that it has now entered the present age, in and through Jesus, it offers all

401 As quoted in Fuellenbach, The Kingdom of God, 90.
402 Ibid.
403 Ibid, 91.
404 Ibid.
the possibility of experiencing its saving power whenever a person hears and responds to its good news.\textsuperscript{405} Although it is not a political power or government, it is a rule of liberating grace, welcomed by the poor in spirit,\textsuperscript{406} but rejected by the populace. It may well seem to be a kingdom of humble beginnings, and it definitely does require faith to perceive it as being the fulfilment of the promise and ultimately to be the glorious embodiment of God’s will for judgment and salvation.\textsuperscript{407} Despite this however, it has manifested itself visibly and is an experience in the present as well as being a hope for the future. In fact the hope in the present reality was such that Jesus had no hesitation in urging His disciples to leave home and family and follow Him, to the point that He made what could be considered as quite a statement when He told one of His disciples who wanted to first bury his father (meaning to look after him until he died) to let the dead bury the dead and instead, come and follow Him.\textsuperscript{408} He could make this demand because the Kingdom of God is a gracious gift that trumps all other worldly concerns and is the pearl of great price for which one should sacrifice all else to obtain it.\textsuperscript{409} This is no passive kingdom – it has great power and will achieve all that has been purposed for it. As described in Daniel 2:44, it has its own power and momentum rendering those who reject it as powerless to prevent its coming; they turn the word

\textsuperscript{405} G.R. Beasley-Murray, \textit{Jesus and the Kingdom of God}, 105.
\textsuperscript{406} Matthew 5:3.
\textsuperscript{407} Ibid, 83.
\textsuperscript{408} Matthew 8:21-22.
\textsuperscript{409} Matthew 13:46.
of grace into a word of judgment, under which they will submit, to the sovereignty of the Lord of the kingdom. 410

Looking to the role of the church in regard to the kingdom we should also seek to clarify another point that is often misunderstood in regard to the relationship between the church and the kingdom. The church and the kingdom are two separate entities and never has it been intended that the kingdom is or ever would be embodied in the form and organisation of the church. 411 The church (ekklesia) is the community of those who, as the true people of God, receive the gifts of the kingdom and are called to be about the business of demonstrating or being a witness to, the Kingdom of God. 412 Ridderbos makes this distinction plain by stating,

The basilea [kingdom] is the great divine work of salvation in its fulfilment and consummation in Christ: the ekklesia [church] is the people elected and called by God and sharing in the bliss of the basilea. 413

What is being argued here though, contrary to Martyn, is that the church, from the time of Christ, has been given a key role in the ongoing work of the Kingdom of God - one that will continue until His return. Jesus began training His followers for this role with the sending out of the disciples as mentioned in several places in the

413 Ibid, 354.
The Greek word used for those sent forth is *apostolos* which denotes an ambassador with a special mission who acts on behalf of a person, represents him, and has been given full powers and authority for this purpose. Obviously part of their role (and now the role of the church) was to preach or express the Gospel in word and deed. But it also reveals that they were to be about a sifting and gathering together of the true people of God.

These, and other instances in the Gospels shows that they were being training for the missionary task of the future. Many more examples are provided in the parables, often emphasising topics such as stewardship of goods when the master is absent, referring to the work they would be charged with after the Lord has returned to the Father in order for His work to continue. It is true that, in the first place, it is the disciples who were with Christ that were given this mandate, but this should not be cause to doubt that they were the forbearers of the permanent role that was to be passed on to the church. The mission given is of great importance. It is actually a call to go out and disciple not only individuals but also nations.

What is made clear here is that the gospel of the Kingdom of God has an essentially universal significance to it that was first revealed to Israel, but would then gather

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414 Matthew 10; Mark 6; Luke 9 & 10.
415 Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, 370.
416 Ibid.
418 Matthew 25:14ff.
419 Obviously, there are some distinctions - those following were not given the mission of writing Scripture and were dependent upon the original apostles for the contents of their preaching.
420 Matthew 28:19.
momentum and go out into all the nations. This should not be of any surprise. All throughout the Old Testament there is this tendency that the whole world and its nations are of concern to God and were meant to be recipients of the salvation promised to Israel. An early statement here is found in Exodus which says,

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel” (Exodus19:5-6).

Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests - to the nations of the world. It was not God’s intention for them to keep their faith and relationship with Him to themselves.421 Jesus did make it clear that His own task was not to go to the Gentiles422 but the apostle Paul certainly knew that this was exactly what he had been called to do423 and in fact that it had fallen to him to do this on Christ’s behalf.424 The nature of this dissertation does not warrant further argument on this topic - suffice to say that the original disciples and those following them were commissioned to take the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth,425 which can only be described as a redemptive-historical act that must be viewed within the scope of an entire administration of fulfilment that began with Jesus’ coming and work.426 As Ridderbos states,

\[\text{footnotes}

421 This is also seen in the prophecies Jesus often referenced in the beginning of His ministry from Isaiah 40-66.
422 Matthew 15:24.
423 Romans 1:5; 13; 3:29.
424 Romans 15:16.
426 Mark 13:10.
It gives to the coming period of the world its meaning and purpose; it is one of the most essential duties that the church has to fulfil in the world at this time.\textsuperscript{427}

Such a mission must continue until the end of the age.

After Jesus’ resurrection the Bible tells the story of two disciples on the road to Emmaus talking with great disappointment as to the outcome of their faith, especially in regard to their disappointment that the redemption of Israel, which they were hoping for, had not happened. They were joined by a third person who, unbeknown to them, was the Lord. Jesus explained the Scriptures to them, (Moses and all the prophets) so they could understand what the Calvary experience was about and what it had achieved.\textsuperscript{428} This reflects the utmost importance of understanding the Old Testament Scriptures in order to see where Martyn’s “invasion” fits in and what should take place as a result. We find a similar explanation given by Stephen in a rather long discourse provided for us in Acts 7. Stephen gives an overview to the Pharisees, of the biblical journey to the point of the coming of Christ and His rejection and persecution by the Pharisees - a sermon that resulted in his own martyrdom. What is of importance here is again the necessity felt, this time by Stephen, to trace the biblical narrative from the time of Abraham to the present day. The point these two illustrations make is that the mission of the church cannot be separated from its roots in the covenant God made with Abraham and neither can the “invasion” be understood unless it is connected

\textsuperscript{427} Ridderbos, \textit{The Coming of the Kingdom}, 382.  
to it. The mission of the church is better described as God’s mission, meaning it begins with the fall in Genesis 3 and finishes with the completion of the new creation in Revelation 22. It is here that true believers find the answer to the question “what are we here for?” The answer is for each person to find their place as they live in God’s world and participate in His mission.  

Because of Martyn’s emphasis on the Apostle Paul, it will be helpful at this point to look briefly at how this great ambassador for Christ understood his own life and work. Speaking of the hardships he has suffered for his calling Paul states,

Are they servants of Christ? — I speak as if insane — I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

This account must beg the question - what was it that kept Paul going through such hardship and adversity? What was he trying to accomplish? Some insight is gained

429 Christopher Wright, The Mission of God’s People (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2010), 46.
by a statement made in Romans 1:5 and repeated in Romans 16:26 where Paul says
he was about bringing the Christian faith to the gentiles for Jesus names sake and
to make the commandments of God known to all the nations, leading to the
obedience of faith. This is very similar to the commission God gave to Abraham in
Genesis 12 about reaching the nations, as discussed previously in this dissertation.
It also clearly connects with the afore-mentioned connection Paul made in
Galatians 3 between the Abrahamic Covenant and its fulfilment in Christ. Martyn
denies this, preferring to argue that Paul clearly endorsed a complete separation
(divorce) from all previous covenants.\textsuperscript{430} Regardless of whose side one may take
on this argument, the New Testament Scriptures provide a wealth of insight as to
what the mission of those in Christ is about. Wright gives a useful summary here
by saying,

So what is the mission of God’s people? Surely it is to live as those who have
experienced that redeeming power of God already, and whose lives - individual
and corporate - are signposts to the ultimate liberation of all creation and humanity
from every form of oppression and slavery.\textsuperscript{431}

This puts in context Paul’s instruction to Timothy about giving a rightful place to
the Word of God, mostly the Old Testament writings at that time, when he said,

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for
correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate,
equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).

\textsuperscript{430} Martyn, \textit{Galatians}, 348.
\textsuperscript{431} Wright, \textit{The Mission of God’s People}, 112.
Another important point comes up here - seen so clearly in Paul’s life and obviously the life of Christ before him it is the role of sacrifice and suffering. Jesus, in commissioning His disciples, spoke very clearly to them about the duties and trials that all who are involved in any missionary movement would inevitably have to embrace. Jesus issued a clear call to cross-bearing discipleship, which can be evidenced maybe or maybe not so subtly, with His comment “as the Father sent Me, so I send you”. He spoke so clearly about the role of the church’s mission being around His cross, resurrection and the worldwide gospel proclamation that it seems safe to assume that He had a significant role for those following Him beyond His invasion. Considering these comments, which incorporate the continuity that began with God’s covenant with Abraham, the Incarnation and Calvary experience of Christ, His subsequent commissioning of His people, and the mission as portrayed by the apostle Paul, there are a few more comments we should make about the role that the church, as Christ’s bride, has been given.

As should have been made clear by now, the church’s role is to focus on the Kingdom of God. George Ladd gives five useful points in his discussion on the church and the kingdom.

1. The church is not the Kingdom; it is only the people of the Kingdom.

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2. The Kingdom creates the church; had it not come into the world by the mission of Jesus, there would never have been the church.

3. The church witnesses to the Kingdom through proclaiming God’s redeeming acts in Christ, both past and future.

4. The church is the instrument of the Kingdom in that the works of the Kingdom are performed through its members as through Jesus himself.

5. The church is the custodian of the Kingdom; through its proclamation of the gospel throughout the world.434

This is an excellent outline of the role of the church and the relationship the church should have with in context with the Kingdom of God. Making this the central emphasis of the church K. E. Skydsgaard offers a useful comment by saying,

In the Kingdom of God, the church has her ultimate frontiers; from the Kingdom she receives all her substance, her power, her hope.435

The letter to the Ephesians and Colossians state that the mission of the Church was to reveal through the ages the hidden plan of God436 and to lead humankind toward its final destiny. It must be seen entirely at the service of this divine plan for the

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435 K.E. Skydsgaard, “Kingdom of God and the Church” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, no. 4, 1951, 386.
436 Ephesians 3:3-11; Colossians 1:26-27.
salvation of all human beings and all of creation.437 Howard Snyder puts it well by saying,

The Church is a Kingdom colony, a people of God on earth called and empowered by the Spirit to show forth the reality of the Kingdom now in assurance that the Kingdom will eventually come in fullness and that their faithful service contributes to that final fullness of God’s reign.438

As well as embracing the Scriptures and holding them up as its guiding light to the witness of God and His Kingdom, the Church should concern itself with the issues of justice, peace, liberation, the issues of the poor and underprivileged, and calling society to observe the ways of the Lord in its role as the pillar and support of the truth. Snyder put forward three tests that he claimed any valid conception of the Kingdom of God must meet. They are,

1. To be solidly ground in Scripture.
2. To be true to the character of Jesus Christ as witnessed by scripture.
3. Be fruitfully relevant in this present age.439

It is within these areas that all true followers of Christ are called today to live out their commitment to the Lord. In fact, Fuellenbach is not unwarranted when he states that no one can claim to be a disciple of Jesus and consciously disregard these aspects.440

440 Fuellenbach, The Kingdom of God, 22.
The argument that is being reinforced here is that true followers of Christ are not only saved “from” something, they are saved “for” something. This journey begins with spiritual restoration and the lifestyle of a disciple, including baptism, praise, worship, study of the scriptures, taking of the sacraments and the joining of a biblical community. But then they should accept the burden of the restoration of all God’s creation, which includes private and public virtue; individual and family life; education and community; work, politics and law; science and medicine; literature, art and music.441 It is an attempt to bring all things under the Lordship of Christ. Although we see here that kingdom life is designed to impact the social-political-religious realms of life, it was also seen as symbolic of the broader struggle between God and the forces of evil.442 For Jesus to claim that all was now under His authority and that this authority had been extended to His people, 443 made a clear pronouncement that the Kingdom of God was a present reality - it had come to “the now.” Twelftree summed this up well by saying,

… for Jesus, his ministry of exorcism was not preparatory to the kingdom nor an indication that the kingdom had arrived, nor even an illustration of the kingdom, but actually the Kingdom of God itself in operation.444

442 Fuellenbach, The Kingdom of God, 86.
This means, as Martyn correctly states, that the world is now a spiritual battleground between two ages. But I would argue that these two ages are contending for the same territory. There is God who was the creator of the complete cosmos and came to earth by way of invasion, to bring the authority which was lost by Adam, back to those in Christ; and Satan, who represents the fallen world and is attempting to hold onto it for himself. As representatives of Christ, the Church is armed for the fight, and assured of ultimate victory. It is, as Martyn states, more in a mop up campaign than an evenly matched war.445 This should not cause despair. The powers of the kingdom have definitely invaded human history and Satan has received a preliminary but decisive defeat.446 The final outcome of the war has been made clear. Victory has been assured, although the battle will continue until the Parousia. As Karl Barth said, “They may rattle the bolt but they will not break down the door.”447

However, the kingdom has more on offer than just its work and warfare. Jurgen Moltmann places much emphasis on the “enjoyment of the kingdom.” He says it is good to work and pray for the kingdom but to “rest and to celebrate” should be seen as adding a note of completion to the kingdom.448 What he is revealing here is that the kingdom is both a task and a gift. As such it cannot be brought about by

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447 Fuellenbach, The Kingdom of God, 92.
faithful adherence to The Law, as Martyn rightly states, and nor can it be forced into the present age by armed violence, as the Zealots thought. As a true gift from God it can only be received in gratitude and awe.\textsuperscript{449} Its constant momentum can best be described using words from Jesus, which say,

\begin{quote}
The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened. (Matthew 13:33).
\end{quote}

This leaven may well seem insignificant when put in the mass of dough, in fact it may be seemingly invisible, but it begins its work immediately and will eventually transform the dough in a manner that will ultimately become evident. Similar parables such as the mustard seed\textsuperscript{450} present the same picture.

The ongoing momentum of the Kingdom of God may well be unseen but it will ultimately become very evident, resulting in the final return of the Lord. But this does not and must not, mean that those in Christ have nothing to do but wait - a prevalent eschatological mindset that has been very damaging to the body of Christ. Instead, we are able to agree with Gerhard Lohfink when he said,

\begin{quote}
The coming of the Basileia [kingdom] is totally and completely God’s work, and totally and completely the work of human beings.\textsuperscript{451}
\end{quote}

Glasser makes a good statement to end this section by the following comment,

\begin{quote}

\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{449} Fuellenbach, \textit{The Kingdom of God}, 97.
\textsuperscript{450} Matthew 13:31.
The kingdom is both presence and promise; both within and beyond history; both God’s gift and [the believer’s] task; we work for it even as we wait for it.\textsuperscript{452}

V. Conclusion

This dissertation has made a careful analysis of Martyn’s work, particularly pertaining to his epic commentary on Paul’s letter to the Galatians. It has acknowledged that this work has been a most helpful contribution and addition to the understanding of apocalyptic theology in its most modern form, and has sought to outline what Martyn actually has to say about this topic. It also acknowledges the usefulness of his work as a commentary on Galatians in its own right. If Martyn was to focus upon these aspects alone, it would be hard to find fault with what he has presented.

But Martyn does not stop here. Along with championing the topic he calls “invasion” Martyn uses his understanding of such a happening to argue that attempting to progress any further in the affairs of the cosmos, apart from this invasion of God, will be in vain. Looking backwards at history, or forward to the future, Martyn denies any form of historical continuity or ongoing continuity (with the exception of at least one further invasion - the Parousia) of the concept that this dissertation is concerned with - the Kingdom of God. The argument of this dissertation has been that Martyn’s invasion should only be considered as part of

\textsuperscript{452} Glasser, \textit{Announcing the Kingdom}, 199.
the picture, a picture that must also concern itself with the transformation of society and the call to humanity to return to God and embrace His ways. What this actually means is that Jesus inaugurates God’s redemptive rule on earth, recapitulating and reconstituting a new covenant community around his own mediatory personhood. He then invites repentant sinners to enter into that new sphere of communion with the triune God for their restoration to Him and the redemption of all creation. There is no doubt that the kingdom and cross are inextricably linked. Jesus death and resurrection were necessary in order that the Kingdom of God could become a transforming power in the realm of reality, because the freedom the Calvary experience brings to whole of creation is essential for humanity to enter into His purposes without the defeat from sin that human fallenness brings. But to suggest that there is little more that can take place to bring redemption to society is a major point of contention that that dissertation has concerned itself with, in regard to Martyn’s work.

This dissertation has also argued that the process of continuity in the narrative of scripture has been, and remains, vital to the unfolding drama that the scriptures provide us with. Emphasised in the importance of continuity is the concept of covenant, especially in regard to the covenant made with Abraham, as a major foundation stone of the Kingdom of God. It was this very covenant, I have argued, that provided the overall continuity of God calling a people to Himself, which

ultimately led to the coming of Christ and the inauguration of His Kingdom, which was heralded in the prophetic work of Daniel, particular in regard to his prophecy of the coming of this Kingdom in Daniel 2:44. The main intention in exploring this prophecy was to convince the reader that the Kingdom of God is an entity in its own right, empowered by the Trinitarian God and that it has its own momentum within the created order, coming to fulfilment in the ultimate return of Christ. It is unchanging, unyielding and ever-moving towards this fulfilment.

I have also argued that this kingdom has a strictly Divine origin and is a very different kingdom than anything that has gone before it. Martyn is correct to state that this kingdom breaks into society by way of invasion, being inaugurated through Christ’s coming to earth, but he fails to acknowledge that it then embarks upon a journey, empowered by the Spirit of God and gathering with it all those who would join Christ in this journey. Like Martyn, I agree that conflict, as in spiritual warfare, is a considerable feature in this journey – but contrary to Martyn, I have argued that this warfare began in Genesis 3 and will continue until the end as described in Genesis 22. It is a battle for territory between the people of God, in their expression of His kingdom and the evil domain of principalities and powers seeking to occupy territory which they lost any claim they ever had over it, as a result of Calvary.454

454 This is not to suggest they were ever the “legal” occupiers - it is just that Adam forfeited the rights given to him at the beginning and Christ, as the last Adam, gained them back on behalf of humanity.
In its description of the Kingdom of God, this dissertation has emphasised what it could or should look like and what it has to do with the followers of Christ. It posited that God is always seeking for sons and daughters who will co-labour with Him to reveal His glory and His purpose(s) to the world. This is done in the name of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit and its vehicle of expression is the Kingdom of God. The kingdom means God’s rule over his people in the material universe. According to George Ladd,

the sovereign rule of God, manifested in the person and work of Christ, creating a people over whom He reigns, and issuing a realm or realms in which the power of His reign is realised.\footnote{\textit{George E. Ladd} in Herman Ridderbos, \textit{The Coming of the Kingdom} (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1962). 47.}

It is not a state or society created by humanity - humans do not prepare it for God. But this must not suggest that there is no part here for humanity to play or to have played. We have made much of the great commission expressed in Matthew 28, and the role given to those in Christ to go out into the world with a witness and a testimony of the Kingdom of God.

This dissertation has also contributed to the topic that shows that this kingdom is hidden by way of the fact that it is not seen by signs to be observed. There is no indication in scripture that nature of this “hidden” kingdom will change until the
Parousia. Nor will it come to any form of completion before the return of Christ. Jesus makes this very clear when describing the kingdom in Matthew 13 by informing His disciples that the wheat and tares will grow up together until the end comes. However to suggest this means the kingdom cannot be discerned is also wrong. Jesus gave Nicodemus clear instructions of what he must do to be able to “see” the Kingdom of God and offered many instances of proof that the kingdom was now here and that it was His desire for all to participate in it. Also, in other parables Jesus spoke how the work of the kingdom that we have already referred to as a result of Daniel 2:44, will continue to go forward although hidden in one sense it is there to be seen by those with eyes to see it and ears to hear the voice of the Lord. It comes with an expression of power, produced through the Holy Spirit and made manifest in the many miracles, signs and wonders, demonstrating that this kingdom had arrived. This gives evidence that the royal power of God, which will revolutionise heaven and earth, is now in motion.

The kingdom is not just limited to the life or role of the Church. The momentum of the Kingdom of God gathers up all sorts of expressions and actions from the systems and people of the world and uses them to express the glory of God. It has been argued in this dissertation that the goal of biblical conversion is not merely to

457 John 3:3.
459 Matthew 13:16. Matthew chapter 13 is just one place where much discussion is given on this topic.
save souls with no thought to history, but is a beginning of the task of expressing the Kingdom of God in the world with explosive force and then to continue to use the powers available from this kingdom, to bring transformation to society. This kingdom is formed in the Godhead, invades society and calls to individuals but its ultimate goal is to glorify God and bring the world back into harmony with His purposes. Many churches today are tragically split between those who stress conversion but have forgotten its goal, and those who emphasise Christian social action seem to have forgotten the necessity for conversion and the worship and glory of God. All need to recover the true meaning(s) of conversion to Jesus Christ and how that opens the door to play a part in His Kingdom.

Finally, this dissertation investigated what the true mission of the followers of Christ should look like, under the preface that those in Christ are called to take up the role that He commenced on earth, after He left to take up His seat at the right hand of the Father. This allows us to describe the true Gospel as a call to salvation that requires its followers to become an expression of the Kingdom of God in both word and deed. According to Käsemann this requires the church to bear the divine work to a world which God has not forsaken. It was this role that Jesus began training His disciples for after He considered them mature enough to begin this work. It is this very mission that gives the world its meaning and purpose; it is one

460 John 14:12.
of the most essential duties that the church has to fulfil in the world at all times. Indeed, it was this very mission that enabled the Apostle Paul to endure the hardships he suffered throughout his ministry as described in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, a mission and calling that he also passed onto the church, training as many as he could to continue the work that had begun in Christ Jesus.462

Fortunately, this kingdom is not all about warfare, self-denial, labouring in prayer and being fruitful. It also a place to rest and celebrate. It is a true gift offered in Christ to all who would commit themselves to it. Harkness makes a useful summary when he states,

    The kingdom is both presence and promise; both within and beyond history; both
    God’s gift and [the believer’s] task; we work for it even as we wait for it.463

The very knowledge of this should serve to allay fears that there is no hope in society and that evil is winning, or that nothing can be changed for the better. True followers of Christ desperately need this hope which provides the promise of victory in their mission to the nations. Despite all forms of opposition, persecution and even martyrdom, the people of God will ultimately experience victory, peoples will be evangelised, converts will come forward, churches will be planted and the

462 Colossians 1:28-29. This is not to suggest all believers have the same calling as Paul - but they need to have the same attitude of commitment and a preparedness to face hardships and adversity.
463 Georgia Harkness, Understanding the Kingdom of God (Nashville, USA: Abingdon Press, 1974), 115.
gospel will victoriously manifest its power as it is increasingly proclaimed throughout the world. As George Ladd so aptly advises,

We should not be optimists, expecting the gospel to conquer the world and establish the Kingdom of God. Neither are we despairing pessimists who feel that our task is hopeless in the face of the evil of this age.  

The Kingdom of God is a power that can be expressed by those in Christ, but it is most accurately seen as an ongoing power, coming from above, that carries its own momentum within the created order and beyond, and will continue until the time that the Lord returns. The focus of this kingdom is not just a New Covenant phenomenon. The Bible contains the history of it from its most distant beginning – the dawn of creation - through to its completion, known as the Parousia (the second coming of Christ) when history will have attained its point of arrival. It entered into the present reality with the coming of Christ and its ultimate goal is never changing - to bring hope to the people and glory to the Father, invoking all of creation bow before Him in worship and adoration.

It seems opportune to finish this dissertation with the beautiful description and promise given by the prophet Isaiah.

How lovely on the mountains

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465 Sofia Cavaletti, The History of the Kingdom of God, Part II: Liturgy and the Building of the kingdom (Ohio, USA: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, 2012), Kindle Location 95.
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who announces peace
And brings good news of happiness,
Who announces salvation,
And says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”
Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices,
They shout joyfully together;
For they will see with their own eyes
When the LORD restores Zion.
Break forth, shout joyfully together,
You waste places of Jerusalem;
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
The LORD has bared His holy arm
In the sight of all the nations,
That all the ends of the earth may see
The salvation of our God  

Amen.

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\[466\] Isaiah 52:7-10.
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