



# THE ESSENTIAL MESSIAH: AN OVERVIEW OF GOD'S KINGDOM PURPOSES

A prelude to our study of Genesis!

## THE KINGDOM BEFORE THE KINGDOM

*Before the Lord created the earth and heavens, He had already created a kingdom consisting of the angelic hosts. Among these hosts was an angel of special honor called Lucifer.*

**Ezekiel 28: 11-17** speaks a warning to the King of Tyre by comparing him to Lucifer. Both of them were assuming prerogatives to rule that belonged to God alone. In this passage, we have a glimpse of the pride that led Lucifer to desire the throne of God for himself.

“You were the seal of perfection,  
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.  
13 You were in Eden,  
the garden of God;  
every precious stone adorned you:  
carnelian, chrysolite and emerald,  
topaz, onyx and jasper,  
lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.<sup>[b]</sup>  
Your settings and mountings<sup>[c]</sup> were made of gold;  
on the day you were created they were prepared.  
14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub,  
for so I ordained you.  
You were on the holy mount of God;  
you walked among the fiery stones.  
15 You were blameless in your ways  
from the day you were created  
till wickedness was found in you.  
16 Through your widespread trade  
you were filled with violence,  
and you sinned.  
So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,  
and I expelled you, guardian cherub,  
from among the fiery stones.  
17 Your heart became proud  
on account of your beauty,  
and you corrupted your wisdom  
because of your splendor.  
So I threw you to the earth;  
I made a spectacle of you before kings.

# WELCOME TO OUR 2023 SURVEY OF THE BIBLE!

The classes that will follow will examine the various books of the Bible individually. Before we dive into that study, I would like to provide this overview of the Bible from the perspective of God's kingdom purposes.

When we examine the Bible, we can begin to see how each epoch of biblical history interconnects. God is directing mankind's history towards an ultimate goal. You will notice that I do not say a conclusion because God's designs are eternal in nature. It's helpful if we think of God's kingdom (where it concerns us) as a series of stages that start with the Garden of Eden as recorded in the book of Genesis and will direct us to God's desired destination of His eternal kingdom as prophesied in the book of Revelation.

As you read through the Bible, please use the following information as a very general guide to some of the subtext of its historical events. Be sure to begin every Bible reading session with prayer for the Holy Spirit to reveal the full meaning, truth, and wonder of God's written word.

# A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

In the (real) beginning, God's kingdom was the heavens. His subjects were the created angelic beings. Those in the kingdom were called to praise Him.

There were Seraphim ("burning ones") who reflected God's glory. There were Cherubim who worshipped God on His throne and were protectors and stewards of God's glory. They are depicted on His Ark of Covenant and in His temples as protectors of His glory. They also became guards in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve were cast out.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ANGELIC KINGDOM?

Lucifer was one of the cherubim, said to be the wisest of the created angelic beings, very beautiful, and holding a seat of glory in the kingdom. Unfortunately, he became prideful (even taking credit for the attributes which God had given him). He continuously set his will against God's will. This passage is addressed to the king of Babylon, but it reflects Lucifer's rebellion:

"I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon, I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High" (**Isaiah 14:13-14**).

With this rebellion against God's authority, Satan set out to make a counterfeit copy of God's kingdom over which he would rule. He began a "counter-kingdom" program. His kingdom, however, is characterized by darkness, deceit, lawlessness, rebellion, denial of truth, ungodliness, unholiness, and disobedience of God.



# WHY ARE WE STARTING HERE?

The kingdom battle between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan underscores God's plans for mankind, His covenants with mankind, and the purposes of all that He does in biblical history. Most of all, it is the reason for the first and second advents of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

We see in the creation narrative that Lucifer (now Satan) is already at work trying to instill his rebelliousness into God's perfect creation by corrupting mankind, who is meant to be God's holy image on earth. That corruption extended to the animal kingdom and the very earth itself, as we will see. It would have been a simple matter for God to eliminate what He had created and start anew. For that matter, it would have been a simple matter for God to eliminate Satan and his rebellious followers at the moment of their rebellion.

Why didn't He do so? We could only speculate, and we will not speculate, second guess, or add to Scripture because that would bring us false theology. All we can know is what God reveals to us, and Scripture will show that God chose the path of mercy and redemption for mankind and forestalled the defeat of Satan. We will also see that He directs the flow of history according to a plan to bring forth a Messiah who will eventually end the rebellion of Satan and bring God's created earth and heavens back into perfection.

# GOD'S KINGDOM ADMINISTRATIONS

God's kingdom usually includes some form of hierarchy, with those in highest authority meant to enact His purposes while remaining ultimately in subjection to Him. These hierarchies or structures were also intended to curb the lawlessness that had led to rebellion in the angelic kingdom (rebelliousness that would inhibit the relationship between God and mankind, at peril of men's physical and spiritual deaths).

As we noted, in the angelic kingdoms, there were various ranks and responsibilities among the angels. As this deals more with angelology (the study of angels), which is not part of this program, we'll leave it at that.

When we examine the course of God's kingdom program, we will notice the various administrative structures He put in place:

- **ADAM: GOD'S VICEROY IN EDEN**
- **THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE**
- **HUMAN GOVERNMENT**
- **THE PATRIARCHS (ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB)**
- **THE PROPHET MOSES**
- **THE LAW OF MOSES**
- **THE JUDGES & THE PROPHET SAMUEL**
- **SAUL, DAVID, AND THE DAVIDIC THRONE**
- **THE KINGS OF ISRAEL & JUDAH (AND THEIR PROPHETS)**
- **THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES**
- **THE MESSIAH**

*What we will notice is that each time God enacted leadership and laws to guide His people into righteousness, there was always a contention with the kingdom of darkness, which seeks to undermine God's efforts to redeem and restore His creation. That is spiritual warfare, and it is still going strong in today's culture.*

# GOD'S KINGDOM ADMINISTRATIONS

So, what happened with each of these kingdom administrations?

Most Christians are familiar with the temptation of Adam and Eve by Satan to eat fruit from the forbidden tree. Adam had been responsible to protect the garden and Eve from the influence of rebellion and sin.

The law of conscience means that God put understanding of right and wrong in the hearts of men so that their consciences would convict them of sin and direct them to righteousness. As we see in the story of Cain and Abel, men did not choose righteousness.

Eve's third son, Seth, established a righteous lineage. Unfortunately, his descendants intermarried with the rebellious descendants of Cain and wickedness spread unchecked until God declared that man's every intention was wicked and condemned the world to the flood. Noah found favor with God and was preserved.

In the interim between the flood and the Mosaic Covenant, human government controlled mankind. However, sin still inclined men towards rebelliousness and lawlessness. The Tower of Babel illustrates one such rebellion, where men attempted to build a tower up to heaven that they might become like God.

The Gentiles remained under human leadership, but God gave the nation of Israel a series of covenants, agreements by which both He and His people would abide. The Mosaic and Palestinian covenants outlined righteous and holy standards for daily living. Yet, the nation of Israel as a whole could not fulfill these standards or curb their inclinations towards rebellion. They were drawn to worship the false idols of the neighboring pagan nations. God sent judges, prophets, and kings to be responsible for curbing Israel's lawlessness. Unfortunately, no matter how many times the people repented and returned to obeying God, they were inevitably drawn back to idolatry. Not even the kings of Israel were immune. The idolatry of King Solomon caused God to divide the nation into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. The line of David ruled over Judah. Both kingdoms maintained their rebellious ways until God finally sent both kingdoms into exile as prisoners of Assyria and Babylon.

Since that time, Israel is in an era known as the "times of the Gentiles", where they are subject to human governments. It will remain this way until the second advent (coming) of Christ, when He takes the throne of Israel as a reunified nation.

# **GOD ALSO CHOSE A SPECIAL PEOPLE...**

We're also going to see that the nation of Israel will play a pivotal part in God's greater kingdom purposes for all of mankind (not to mention in the advent of the Messiah, who is ultimately going to fulfill those purposes).

This doesn't mean that the rest of us are left out of God's kingdom plan. Quite the contrary, as we will see, the history of God's nation Israel and the other nations of the world are interwoven in the past, present, and future. The Hebrew people and the Gentile nations both have important roles to fulfill in the redemption story, and the Gentiles are even found in the genealogy of the Messiah.

What we need to understand is that the covenants God would make with His specially chosen nation of Israel are foundational to how He would direct history towards the Messiah, to give us confidence in God's commitment to the redemption of all mankind, to let us glimpse His future eternal kingdom, and to assure His people again and again that there is nothing impossible to God. He will keep every promise in every covenant. Speaking of which...



# THE CRUCIAL COVENANTS BETWEEN GOD AND MANKIND

## THE ADAMIC COVENANT

God's apparent punishment of Adam, Eve, and the serpent included some hidden promises about the future of mankind (and the downfall of Satan).

*"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)*

This is not the whole of the Adamic Covenant (we'll cover that later), but it is a key moment: God is promising a line of offspring from the woman, Eve, including one offspring who will crush the head of the serpent, Satan. This defeat of the serpent will include suffering on the part of Eve's offspring. Need we clarify that the offspring is the Messiah and the suffering will be His death on the cross,

## THE NOAHIC COVENANT

Along this thread, when God sent divine judgment upon earth, animal, and man in the form of the great flood, He still preserved Noah.

Noah is the direct descendant of Eve, naturally (all men are). Reminder: God could have wiped out all men, but He preserved the line of Eve. In doing so, He is preserving His promise that one of her descendants will crush the head of the serpent, Satan.

We need to remember that God will keep His covenant promises. Again, this is not the whole of the Noahic covenant, which will be covered later, but a continuing thread of God's redemption plan.

## THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

This is an incredible turning point of redemptive history. Everything that God will do in Israel that makes redemption possible for all mankind begins in this covenant. It is His first true revelation about His plans for redeeming mankind.

In this covenant, God promises Abraham more offspring than can be counted. He promises to make them His People. He promises to give them a vast land of their own. He promises that kings will be among Abraham's descendants. He also promises that, before they can occupy this land, they will first be in bondage in a foreign land for 400 years. Through his descendants, all nations will be blessed.

In this, we discover that God has selected a very special lineage from among the myriad nations and families of man. Abraham is the descendant of Eve; His lineage will produce the greatest king ever, the Messiah.

## ...AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT...

Read about it it:

**Genesis 12:1-3**

**Genesis 15:18-21**

**Genesis 17:7-21**

**Genesis 35:10-12**

The Abrahamic Covenant is foundational to understanding God's kingdom plan for redeeming all of mankind, even though the covenant promises are basically only for the descendants of Abraham.

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, would one day bless his sons (for whom the twelve tribes of Israel are named). For his son, Judah, Jacob states that "the scepter will not depart from Judah". This statement identifies Judah as the tribe from whom the kings of Israel will descend, including the Messiah. You will observe in biblical history that God is careful to preserve a survivor from this lineage regardless of what tragedies and judgements befall the nation. This is the line of descendants from Eve to Christ, who will defeat Satan as promised in the Adamic Covenant.

The Messiah is promised to redeem Israel. How does that help the Gentiles? We see in Abraham's story that his faith and obedience to God counted him as righteous in God's eyes. The same will hold true for the Gentile nations: Those who believe in the Messiah will be "adopted" in a sense into Abraham's family and counted among his descendants, whom God has promised to redeem.

This covenant also introduces circumcision. This act was one of obedience by which fathers demonstrated faith in God and the redemption He promised. Later in the Bible, in the New Covenant, God will speak of circumcising people's hearts. That will mean changing people's hearts to be inclined towards faith in Christ.

# THE CRUCIAL COVENANTS BETWEEN GOD AND MANKIND

## THE MOSAIC COVENANT

This presented the "Law of Moses" (really the law of God) to the descendants of Abraham after God rescued them from bondage in Egypt. It is the guidelines for holy and obedient living. The Ten Commandments are part of this covenant. Their agreement to enter into this covenant with God and to practice all the prescriptions of its law officially made the twelve tribes into the nation of Israel. It also introduces the concept of sacrifices to atone for one's sins.

This covenant also underscores that it is impossible for man to live up to the standards of holiness God requires. We see this in Israel's repeated failures to obey the law. It was necessary to have a Messiah who COULD live in obedience to the requirements of the law. Animal blood cannot completely atone for human sin because a human life is worth more than an animal's. A perfect human had to offer his blood to cover man's sins permanently.

## THE PALESTINIAN COVENANT

This was a reaffirmation of Abraham's descendants and their agreement to live as God's people according to the Law of Moses that He provided. At this point in biblical history, the generation that God rescued from Israel has passed away and the next generation is about to be led into the land of the pagan nations. This is the land God promised Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant.

From the Messianic perspective, again, we know that mankind could not live up to this covenant agreement. God's justice required death for disobedience, rebellion, and sin because these covenants were blood oaths. Modern man cannot live up to God's law either. Mankind needed a Messiah to pay the death penalty in our place so that we could be saved from faith in His sacrifice.

## THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

This covenant is pivotal to biblical history. Now that we know the Messiah would descend from Eve through the line of Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, the kings God promised are finally on the throne in Israel. God promises King David that one of his descendants will always sit on the throne so long as there is a throne in Israel. God means this ETERNALLY. There would be interruptions to the line (as in the current era where there are no kings in Israel), but that did not nullify this covenant. God's intention, as Scripture reveals, is for the Messiah to rule over Israel from David's throne.

# THE NEW COVENANT

“New Testament” actually means New Covenant. This covenant marks the advent (coming) of Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

His sacrifice on the cross would open the door to redemption for Israel and the Gentiles. Scripture states that God's people in the end times will be a multitude of believers from every nation. However, this covenant does NOT mean that God's kingdom purposes have been fulfilled. It is not yet the time of the eternal kingdom. The Messiah's final victory over the kingdom of Satan will not happen until the end of times, which we will examine in depth when in our study of the book of Revelation. **(Jeremiah 31:31-34)**

## What is the New Covenant Then?

It is God's promise to all mankind that He will forgive sin and restore communion (relationship with Him) to those whose hearts believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The death of Christ the Messiah on the cross is the basis of this covenant. By Christ's resurrection, God demonstrates that He alone has power over life and death.

Christ's sacrifice also means that mankind is no longer subject to the Law of Moses (although we should continue to strive towards the standards of righteous living, we are no longer required to perform sacrifices to “cover” our sins because Christ's blood has done this for us). We are now saved by God's grace and mercy in accepting Jesus as our substitute in death.

In this covenant, God has softened men's hearts so that we are capable of having faith in Him and living in obedience. This is made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, which helps them understand God's teachings and desires for our righteous living.



# WHY IS THERE A DELAY IN THE MESSIAH'S VICTORY OVER SATAN AND THE ADVENT OF HIS ETERNAL KINGDOM?

## The Eternal Kingdom was rejected

Christ's first advent (coming) presented the people of Israel with the chance to acknowledge Him as the Messiah, believe, and choose the kingdom.

Unfortunately, the religious leaders of that generation (particularly the Pharisees) were unconvinced of Christ's identity. They went so far as to credit His miracles to Satan (which is the sin known as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit). When their leaders rejected Christ as Messiah, as a nation the people of Israel followed suit (though there were individuals who believed and are saved).

At that time, the kingdom of Christ was postponed (because God has promised the kingdoms in His covenants, it will eventually come with the second advent or second coming of Christ). The new message preached was individual faith in Christ and repentance of sins.  
**(Matthew 12, Mark 3, Luke 12)**

## To give men and women time to repent and be saved

The second advent of Christ was delayed until the message of His life, death, and resurrection and the offer of salvation through His sacrifice is preached to all people.

Spreading the word, and the opportunity for salvation, is the explicit commission of the Christian church. The Bible states that it is not God's will that anyone should perish, but His holy nature cannot abide wickedness or let it go unpunished. The delay of the kingdom gives more people the opportunity to believe and allow Christ to pay the penalty for them.

**(Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:6-8)**

## All things happen according to God's timing, not man's.

One clear lesson of Scripture is that mankind cannot truly fathom the mysteries of the Lord's workings. It tells us that a future has been set where there will be a final battle between His Kingdom and the kingdom of darkness. It tells us that battle will take place after the Tribulation, which is a period of false prophets, severe persecution of Israel, and a charismatic leader who will present himself as God. Then will come a peaceful Millennial Kingdom when Christ will rule from David's throne, and finally the last rebellion of Satan and man, which the Lord will end. There will be judgement of mankind, after which the Eternal Kingdom will be established. Only God knows the time this will happen.

## NEXT LESSON:

- Please read Genesis Chapter 1 – 11:10
- Consider what the creation narrative reveals about God's character traits.
- Look for the expectations and responsibilities (as His representative) that God had for Adam in the Garden.
- Consider the influence of conscience on choices between right and wrong as you read the story of Cain and Abel.
- Why do you suppose it was so difficult for men and women to curb their inclinations towards lawlessness (and “the devil made them do it” is not really the answer we’re looking for ;-)
- Why do you suppose God was unwilling to give up on mankind? Why did He promise Eve’s descendant the Messiah would defeat evil instead?



## References:

*"Thy Kingdom Come: Tracing God's Kingdom Program and Covenant Promises"* by J. Dwight Pentecost, Sept 21, 1995

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