

Kingdom, Covenants & Canon of the Old Testament

Lesson 2

The Kingdom of God

Lesson Guide



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

A proper understanding of the kingdom provides one of the most comprehensive and unifying perspectives we can have on the Old Testament.

II. Broad and Narrow (2:34)

In a broad sense, God's rule is complete and unchanging, but in a narrow sense, God's rule is developing throughout history.

A. Unchanging (4:16)

God's reign and kingdom are complete and unchanging (Psalm 93:1-2).

B. Developing (7:57)

God manifests his unwavering sovereignty with the passage of time.

Ultimately, God will fill the earth with his visible glory and receive endless praise for who he is and what he has done.

Jesus summarized Old Testament's outlooks on God's developing kingdom in The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-10).

Jesus called us to pray for God's visible glory to fill the earth with the same glory that already fills heaven.

III. Primeval History (19:48)

The primeval history covers the events described in Genesis 1:1–11:9.

A. Place (21:38)

Genesis 1-11 describes the earth as the [place] of God's kingdom.

1. Initial Preparations (22:20)

In Genesis 1:2–2:3, God began to construct the earth into a place for his glorious reign to extend from heaven to earth.

- Chaos (Gen. 1:2):

At first, the earth (or the creation below heaven) was “without form and void,” covered with “darkness” and “the deep.”

- Six days of Ordering (Gen 1:3-31):
 - Days 1-3 – God dealt with the fact that the world was formless.
 - Days 4-6 – God dealt with the fact that the world was void (empty).

- Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3):

God sat back on his throne in heaven, delighted in his accomplishments, and received honor for what he had done

2. Ongoing Expansion (29:24)

God saw that all he had created was “good” (*tov* in Hebrew), but what he had done was only the beginning of something much greater.

God adorned Eden as the earth’s centerpiece and placed within it a magnificent, sacred garden fit for the special presence of the King of Heaven.

The condition of the earth at the end of the first week was just the starting point for the developing, historical kingdom of God.

B. People (33:49)

God determined to fulfill his kingdom purposes primarily through the human race.

God had created humanity for a purpose that was too great for one man to accomplish on his own (Genesis 2:18).

1. Priests (36:12)

Adam and Eve were given the task of serving as God's priests.

Adam and Eve's role in the garden reflects the description of the Levites' role in their priestly service to God (Genesis 2:15; Numbers 3:8).

2. Vice-Regents (38:45)

God called Adam and Eve to serve as his vice-regents or royal representatives.

Many passages in the Old and New Testaments call human beings the "image" or "likeness" of God (e.g., Genesis 1:26).

From the beginning, God called every human being to be his priestly, royal image, and to fulfill “the cultural mandate” (Genesis 1:27-28).

Extending God’s kingdom throughout the world was the very purpose for which God put human beings on the earth.

C. Progress (45:04)

During the primeval history, God assured the human race that his grand kingdom purpose for them would not fail.

1. Cosmic Treason (46:10)

Because of Adam and Eve’s rebellion:

- Humanity and the earth were cursed.

- Multiplication and dominion became painful, difficult, and frustrating (Genesis 3:16-17).

2. Corruption and Judgment (48:14)

Adam and Eve's descendants pursued a path of corruption that eventually led to severe judgment from God (Genesis 6:5-7).

3. Long-term Strategy (48:14)

God determined to redeem a people for himself over time and to build his kingdom through them.

Satan's offspring and Eve's offspring will be at enmity with each other until Eve's seed — redeemed humanity — conquers Satan (Genesis 3:15).

The hope of victory over evil for redeemed, faithful images of God extends throughout history and reaches its fulfillment in Christ.

God established stability in nature so that his images would fulfill the task of spreading his kingdom to the ends of the earth.

IV. Nation of Israel (55:23)

God chose Israel to lead the human race in the service he had ordained for them from the beginning.

A. Place (56:41)

God called Abraham and his descendants to reorient themselves to the vicinity of Eden and to fulfill humanity's original commission (Genesis 12:1-3).

“The Promised Land” became the staging ground for Israel's kingdom service.

1. Original Center (59:06)

The original centerpiece of God's earthly kingdom was the land of Eden.

Four rivers marked the boundaries of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14).

Two rivers marked the boundaries of the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 15:18).

The Promised Land's geographical boundaries roughly parallel the boundaries of the land of Eden.

2. Expansion (1:03:02)

Israel's Promised Land was the starting point for the geographical expansion of God's reign through Israel to the ends of the earth.

God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Romans 4:13):

- God would bless and curse other nations in response to their reaction to Abraham.
- Abraham and his descendants would bring blessings to all families of the earth.

B. People (1:05:45)

God ensured that the people of Israel would lead the way in spreading God's rule throughout the world.

1. Selection of Israel (1:06:45)

The genealogical information in Genesis explains the background of God's selection of Israel as his chosen people.

- The seed of Eve
- The patriarchs
- The twelve tribes of Israel

2. Kingdom of Priests (1:08:52)

God clearly declared his purpose for Israel as a holy nation, treasured possession, and royal priesthood. (Exodus 19:4-6).

3. Priests and Kings (1:11:10)

Aaron and his descendants led the nation in worship, sacrifice, and instruction in the law of God.

God ordained David and his descendants to serve as kings over Israel.

C. Progress (1:12:43)

Despite Israel's cycles of accomplishment and failure, God's prophets reassured Israel that God would spread his kingdom to the ends of the earth.

1. Promise (1:13:56)

During the days of the patriarchs, God made many promises about the future of Israel, including:

- Promises of Israel's multiplication (Genesis 15:5).
- Promises of Israel's dominion (Genesis 15:7).

2. Exodus and Conquest (1:17:05)

God redeemed Israel from Egypt in order to expand his kingdom on earth. (Exodus 15:13).

God guided his people toward his holy dwelling as their shepherding King. (Exodus 15:17-18).

3. Empire (1:20:58)

God determined that a human king would lead Israel and all nations to spread God's kingdom to the ends of the earth.

- The reigns of David and Solomon represented a significant forward movement of God's kingdom (1 Chronicles 29:23).
- David's house was also a royal priesthood to lead in true worship of God (1 Chronicles 28:22).

The ultimate goal for all of the developments that took place in Israel was that God's glory would fill the entire earth (Psalm 72:19).

V. New Testament (1:28:46)

The Christian gospel is the proclamation that Jesus overcomes the failures of the past and succeeds in spreading God's kingdom to the ends of the earth.

A. Place (1:31:37)

New Testament faith proclaims that Jesus fulfills the last stage of God's kingdom on earth.

1. Center (1:06:58)

Christ's kingdom work began at the geographical center of God's reign — in the land of Israel.

Israel suffered under God's judgment, but Jesus came to reverse their circumstances and to bring the final stages of God's kingdom.

- Jesus referred to Old Testament hopes for the success of God's kingdom purposes (Luke 4:17-19; Isaiah 61).
- Jesus proclaimed that he was the one predicted to end Israel's exile and to bring God's blessings to his people (Luke 4:20:21).

2. Expansion (1:38:41)

The final geographical expansion of God's kingdom was set in motion by Jesus' first advent.

- Jesus taught his disciples to pray for God's kingdom to extend throughout the world (Matthew 6:10).
- Jesus and first century apostles and prophets would spread God's kingdom from the Promised Land to all the world (Matthew 24:14).

B. People (1:40:03)

Israel had fallen short in spreading God's kingdom, but Jesus would defeat God's enemies and bless people throughout the earth.

1. Christ (1:41:12)

Jesus became a man to fulfill the critical role that God had ordained for his image from the beginning.

- Last Adam

Adam's sin condemned humanity to futility and eternal judgment, but Jesus' perfect obedience brought eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

- Priest and King

As a royal priest, Jesus offered himself as final sacrifice for sin on the cross (Hebrews 4:14).

Jesus, the righteous Anointed One, is seated forever on David's throne (Luke 1:32-33).

2. Believers (1:48:01)

All true believers are joined to Christ, so the church now serves as the people of God's kingdom:

- The New Testament speaks of all followers of Christ as renewed images of God (Ephesians 4:24).
- Peter described the New Testament church as God's royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).

C. Progress (1:51:41)

Jesus is the Messiah, but he is going to bring the kingdom of God to earth over a long period of time (Matthew 13:31-32).

- Inauguration: Jesus and his apostles and prophets inaugurated the final victorious stage of God's glorious kingdom on earth (Ephesians 2:20).

- **Continuation:** Christ continues to enlarge his kingdom through the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world (Matthew 6:33).

- **Consummation:** Christ will return and fulfill God's plan to turn the whole world into his kingdom (Revelation 11:15).

We place our faith and hope in what Jesus has done, continues to do, and will do in the future to bring a new creation filled with God's glory.

VI. Conclusion (1:57:14)

5. Briefly sketch the progress of God's kingdom during the primeval period.

6. What was the place of the kingdom during the days of ancient Israel?

7. How did the people of ancient Israel establish and prepare God's kingdom?

8. Describe the progress of God's kingdom during the time of ancient Israel.

9. What does the New Testament say about the place of God's kingdom?

10. How does the New Testament describe the people of the kingdom of God?

11. Explain the New Testament's teaching about the progression of God's kingdom.

Application Questions

1. What did Jesus mean in Matthew 6:9-10 when he taught his disciples to pray “your kingdom come”?
2. When God created the earth, he judged it to be good. And after humanity’s fall into sin, God established a long-term strategy for redeeming the earth from its fallen state. In light of God’s program for redemption, how should Christians view the earth?
3. In God’s kingdom strategy, people are his chosen instruments by which he is preparing the earth to become his kingdom. What implications does this have for your interactions with others? What does it imply about the significance of individual service to God?
4. What kind of kingdom is God establishing? When God’s kingdom is manifested on earth as it is now manifested in heaven, what will life on earth be like?
5. What is the connection between the gospel and the kingdom of God? How does knowing this connection enrich your understanding of the gospel?
6. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study? Why?

Glossary

Aaron – Moses' brother from the tribe of Levi whose family was selected to serve in the specialized office of priest

Abraham – Old Testament patriarch, son of Terah, father of the nation of Israel with whom God made a covenant in Genesis 15 and 17 promising innumerable descendants and a special land

Adam – The first man; husband of Eve; man with whom God made the covenant of foundations in which humanity was to fill and subdue the earth

canon – Authoritative standard; the exclusive collection of documents in the Judeo-Christian tradition recognized as Scripture

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

David – Second Old Testament king of Israel who received the promise that his descendant would sit on the throne and reign forever

Eden – Hebrew term meaning "pleasant" or "delightful"; name of the garden where God initially placed Adam and Eve

Eve – The first woman; wife of Adam who, after eating the forbidden fruit, received God's promise that her seed (offspring) would crush Satan's head

Isaac – Son of Abraham and Sarah; heir of God's covenant promises

Jacob – Son of Isaac who became the familial head of the twelve tribes of Israel

Levites – Those from the tribe of Levi; served as priests for the nation of Israel

Noah – Man who, under God's direction, built an ark and survived the Flood; individual with whom God made a universal covenant that promised the enduring stability of nature

omnipresence – Existing in all places

primeval history – The record of the earliest stages of earth's history in Genesis 1:1–11:9

Promised Land – The land that God promised to give as an inheritance to Abraham and his descendants

Shem – Son of Noah chosen to continue the family line

tov – Hebrew term (transliteration) meaning "good," "pleasant," "pleasing," "beautiful"

vice-regent – A person who acts in place of a regent or other ruler