

God's Kingdom

God's people living in God's place, blessed under God's rule - enjoying the benefits and fulfilling the responsibilities - and being a blessing to the world

Blessed under God's rule

Enjoying the benefits: life as it's supposed to be; connection and closeness to God; wholeness; harmony; healthy relationship with ourselves (how we think and feel about ourselves); healthy relationships with others (how we relate to and interact with them); beauty, life and light.








Fulfilling the responsibilities: accepting his definition of good and evil; living life in the way he's defined; following his instruction and direction; submitting ourselves under his rule; trusting him.







Being a blessing to the world

Means: joining in with what God is doing; reflecting him; representing him; acting like him; forming the formless earth; taming the wild; ordering the chaos; creating form, structure, beauty; filling the empty earth; creating life, energy and potential; establishing God's kingdom on earth; bringing it from heaven to earth; expanding and spreading his kingdom; a worldwide kingdom, everywhere for everyone.

Our problem

Is: rejecting God as king; refusing to live under his rule; rejecting the responsibilities; losing the benefits; ignoring God's definition of good and evil and making up our own; asserting ourselves over God's rule; trusting ourselves; having a sin problem; having snake-hearted instincts; forming and filling the earth with chaos, death and darkness; spiralling downwards towards self-destruction; becoming disconnected and distanced from God; needing saving from our enemies and saving from ourselves.

	God's People	God's Place	Blessed Under His Rule	Being a Blessing
 Creation	Humans (the man and the woman, Adam and Eve).	<p>The Garden of Eden.</p> <p>People live in the garden. God lives in the garden too. They are connected and close to him.</p>	They enjoy the benefits: they are free to eat from the Tree of Life. They must fulfil the responsibilities: they must not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.	People are made in God's image to represent and reflect him. He invites them to form and fill the earth, to expand the garden. The plan is for a worldwide kingdom everywhere for everyone.
 Fall	Humans (the man and the woman, Adam and Eve).	<p>The Garden of Eden.</p> <p>People are thrown out of the garden. They are disconnected and distanced from God.</p>	They eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, so lose access to the Tree of Life. Rejecting the responsibilities means losing the benefits. People are instinctively snake-hearted and have a sin problem.	They are unable to expand God's kingdom and often do the opposite. God's plan is in danger. God promises a future snake crusher.
 Promise	<p>Abraham's family, the Israelites.</p> <p>They are chosen by God who says they will become a great nation.</p>	<p>The Promised Land.</p> <p>God says one day they will live in a land of their own. It's not their land yet, it's the land of Canaan.</p>	God says he will bless them. The question is how God can keep this promise when people instinctively reject God as king.	God says they will be a blessing to all people. God guarantees his original plan for the world through Abraham's family.
 Rescue	<p>The Israelites.</p> <p>They become a great nation but are enslaved by Pharaoh.</p>	<p>The Promised Land.</p> <p>God liberates them from Egypt and they begin their journey there.</p>	God frees them from suffering under Pharaoh's rule so they can be blessed under his rule.	God frees them from being trapped building Pharaoh's kingdom so they can establish God's kingdom.
 Law	The Israelites.	<p>The Promised Land.</p> <p>They wander in the desert, they have not yet arrived at the land. God lives with them in the Tabernacle, a tent designed by him.</p>	The law lays out the responsibilities for them to fulfil as they live with God as king. They recognise their sinfulness and incompatibility with a holy God. Laws related to the Tabernacle, priests and sacrifices show how to be connected and close to God again.	
 Land	The Israelites.	<p>Israel.</p> <p>God gives them the promised land. They arrive, overcome the resistance, share it out. It is now the land of Israel.</p>	They repeatedly reject God, falling into a self-destructive spiral. They need a leader to save them from their enemies and from themselves.	
 Kings	The Israelites.	<p>Israel.</p> <p>They live in the land. God lives with them in the newly built Temple.</p>	God chooses King David's family to give them the kind of leadership they need. God's promises are significantly fulfilled through his son, King Solomon.	God promises a future king from David's family — a son who will build the Temple and reflect and represent God. God will establish his kingdom forever through this family.

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 Split	<p>The Israelites.</p> <p>The nation is torn in two.</p>	<p>Israel.</p> <p>Civil war divides the kingdom into Israel in the north and Judah in the south.</p>	<p>Most kings are bad and have the same sin problem as the people. Some kings are good but eventually die. Kings fail to lead the people in fulfilling the responsibilities and so in enjoying the benefits.</p>	<p>The question is how God can keep his promise of an eternal kingdom when most kings are bad and when the good kings die.</p>
 Exile	<p>The Israelites.</p> <p>The nation is reduced and scattered.</p>	<p>Israel.</p> <p>They are invaded and deported to foreign lands — Israel to Assyria, Judah to Babylon. The capital city and the Temple are destroyed.</p>	<p>The people have rejected the responsibilities and so lost the benefits. God's kingdom lies in ruin.</p>	<p>They are trapped. They are unable to spread and establish God's kingdom.</p>
 Return	<p>The Israelites.</p>	<p>Israel.</p> <p>A small population returns to the land. The capital city and the Temple are rebuilt.</p>	<p>There is partial restoration but things are not as good as they used to be. There is a lingering sense that this isn't the true ending of the story.</p>	
 Jesus	<p>Jesus.</p>	<p>God lives fully in Jesus. He is God. He is God with us.</p>	<p>Jesus fulfils the promises made to Abraham and David. He is uniquely blessed under God's rule, enjoying the benefits and fulfilling the responsibilities like no-one else has. He dies and rises again: crushing the snake; saving us from our enemies and ourselves; taking our sin; and renewing connection and closeness with God.</p>	<p>Jesus is the promised king who perfectly represents and reflects God. He spreads God's rule to the world. Through him, God establishes his kingdom. Jesus reinvites us to join in with the original plan, to join him as he expands God's kingdom to everyone everywhere.</p>
 Church	<p>The Church.</p> <p>A community of people from all nations brought into God's kingdom by Jesus and his Spirit.</p>	<p>God lives in his people by his Spirit. He is not just with them, he is in them. They are connected and close to him in a new way.</p>	<p>The Spirit transforms people from inside out, reforming their instincts. They are changed to enjoy the benefits like Jesus does and to fulfil the responsibilities like Jesus does.</p>	<p>The Spirit empowers the church to witness about Jesus. They expand God's kingdom to the ends of the world.</p>
 Forever After	<p>The Church.</p> <p>They become countless people from all nations.</p>	<p>The New Creation.</p> <p>The new earth is totally formed and filled. The garden has been expanded and upgraded into a world-covering city. People live there. God lives there too. He is with them and in them. They are permanently connected and close to him.</p>	<p>People are blessed under the rule of King Jesus. The Tree of Life continually flourishes: people enjoy full and unending kingdom benefits, life as it's supposed to be. No Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil exists: Jesus has fulfilled all kingdom responsibilities, so there is no possibility of failure.</p>	<p>Jesus returns. The plan is complete. Jesus is a blessing to all people. He permanently establishes God's kingdom. There is a worldwide kingdom everywhere for everyone, forever.</p>