

THE NOAHIC COVENANT

THE BEGINNING OF GOD'S KINGDOM PROGRAM

The Universal Kingdom

- We must first understand God's sovereign universal kingdom which is God's absolute sovereignty and control over all creation at all times
- Not one area of the universe is outside of God's control.... His reign is an eternal one
- There has never been a time when God has failed to exercise dominion over His creation

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 ~ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

Psalms 145:13 ~ Psalm 145:13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Psalms 103:19 ~ Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.

Daniel 4:34-35 ~ But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

- God's reign over the universe already exists, is always in operation, and extends to every corner of the universe
- The center of God's kingdom and throne is in heaven where He is always in control and where He always accomplishes His will
- "This is the rule of God over the entire universe. In this kingdom nothing happens outside of the will of God because He is sovereign and in control... This aspect of the kingdom of God would, therefore, be the broadest expression of the kingdom of God. His is an eternal, sovereign rule everywhere over the entire creation."¹

The Mediatorial Kingdom

- The mediatorial aspect of God's kingdom is His rule on earth through man who acts as God's representative
- While God's universal kingdom is present now as He eternally rules over all creation, His mediatorial kingdom is not presently on earth
- Although Christ came to usher in this aspect of the kingdom in His first coming, it is yet future since it was rejected by Israel when they spurned the Lord Jesus

Daniel 2:44 ~ 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.

Matthew 4:17 ~ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

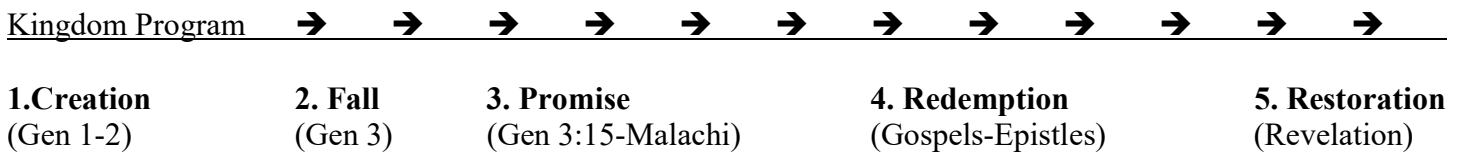
Matthew 6:10 ~ Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

¹ Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 140.

Acts 1:6 ~ So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”

- There will be 2 phases to God’s mediatorial kingdom on the earth:
 - The Millennial Kingdom – occurs when Jesus Christ destroys all human kingdoms and establishes his own in which He will physically and literally rule after His Second Coming
 - The Eternal Kingdom – occurs after the millennial kingdom when God reigns over a new heaven and new earth that is free from all opposition to His rule, as it was at the very beginning when the universe was created...this is a restoration of paradise lost

The Mediatorial Kingdom Program



- The establishment of the mediatorial kingdom constitutes the Bible’s storyline
- It shows how the kingdom created goes to the kingdom fallen which then leads to the kingdom restored
- The mediatorial kingdom theme of the Bible can be summarized in the following five developments:
 1. First, the kingdom is present with *creation* as God the king of creation tasks His image-bearer, man, to rule and subdue His creation.
 2. Second, the *fall* marks man’s failure to rule God’s creation; both God’s image-bearers (humans) and the creation come under the devastating effects of the fall.
 3. Third, the *promise* plan guarantees the seed of the woman will eventually succeed over the power behind the serpent (Satan); the fall will be reversed and man will effectively rule over creation.
 4. Fourth, Jesus the King brings *redemption* through His atonement, and His death is the basis for the kingdom and reconciliation of all things.
 5. Fifth, with the *restoration* of all things God’s kingdom plan is fulfilled as Jesus successfully reigns over the earth; this kingdom merges into the perfect kingdom of the Father.²
- So, the Bible begins with God as Creator/King of the universe and man as the image-bearer of God who is to rule and subdue the earth for the glory of God

Genesis 1:26-28 ~ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- And it ends with the Lamb on the throne and God’s people ruling on the new earth

Revelation 22:3, 5 ~ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him...And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

² Taken from Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 23.

- So the theme of the mediatorial kingdom dominates the entire story line of the Bible...beginning with God as King and man's right to rule under Him...and ending with God on the throne and man reigning under Him over a new earth

FOUNDATIONS OF THE KINGDOM

The Creation of the Kingdom

- God's plan for an earthly kingdom begins in Genesis 1
- In six literal, 24-hour days God created the universe and everything in it – the sun, planets, animals, birds, fish, vegetation, land, sea – this would be the realm for God's mediatorial kingdom
- Although God was king and could have ruled over this new world directly, God chose to make man to act as His vice regents and mediators over His creation

Genesis 1:26-28 ~ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- Notice that man was made in the "image" and "likeness" of God – man is made "like" God to act on God's behalf
- Notice that man was to "rule over" creation and "subdue" it – man is to exercise God's delegated authority over His creation
- Thus, man is God's image bearer created to rule the earth on God's behalf and act as His mediator
- Mankind is to rule from and over the earth

Psalms 8:5-6 ~ Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

- That mankind was to mediate God's kingship on earth is evident from the fact that God instructed Adam to work the ground and name the animals

Genesis 2:15 ~ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Genesis 2:19-20 ~ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field...

- "So from the beginning the kingdom mandate from God was holistic. It included both spiritual and physical. It involved relationships with other human beings. Understanding this helps us avoid any misconceptions that God's kingdom purposes are only spiritual. Or that when Jesus arrives on the scene, the kingdom He offers is just 'spiritual' in nature."³

³ Vlach, *He Will Reign*, 64-65.

The Command of the Kingdom

- Though Adam and Eve were created to be in fellowship with God, they were in a state of unconfirmed holiness
- So, God gave them a command, a condition to meet in order to willingly express obedience to their Creator from their hearts

Genesis 2:16-17 ~ The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

- This command was to be obeyed as an expression of worship
- It was given to help Adam understand that, while he had many privileges, he must obey God and operate within the framework God determined
- He needed to understand and show that his role as vice-regent was to operate under the recognition of the ultimate King – God

The Corruption of the Kingdom

- Unfortunately, Adam failed the test...he and Eve sinned and declared their independence from God by acting autonomously and eating the fruit of the forbidden tree

Genesis 3:6 ~ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

- This disobedience by God’s image-bearers was instigated by Satan and his anti-kingdom program in his attempt to foil God’s kingdom program...this battle between God’s kingdom and Satan’s kingdom would dominate human history
- This defection from the command of God brought massive consequences beyond anything Adam could have ever envisioned:
 - Curse on the serpent – vs. 14
 - Curse on Satan – vs. 15
 - Curse on the woman – vs. 16
 - Curse on the ground – vs. 17-18
 - Curse on the man – vs. 19
- The domain of the kingdom – the earth itself and all the relationships within it – was now stained with the effects of sin
- But in man’s darkest hour, a glimmer of hope shone...there was hope for a coming Savior-King (the proto-evangelion)

Genesis 3:15 ~ 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.”

- The battle between the “seed” of Satan and the “seed” of woman will continue until it will come to a climax when an individual from the seed of the woman brings victory
- “He” will deliver a mortal wound to Satan but will suffer (“bruise him on the heel”) harm in the process
- Eve may have thought her son Cain was this deliverer

Genesis 4:1 ~ I have gotten a man, the Lord

- Lamech (Noah's father) also believed Noah could be the one to remove the curse

Genesis 5:28-29 ~ Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed."

- Notice that Lamech was aware of the curse in Genesis 3, he was awaiting an individual who would take away the curse, and there was an expectation that Noah could be this savior from the curse
- Although neither Cain nor Noah were the promised Savior-King, it reveals the expectation that God would restore the creation through a special man

THE KINGDOM AND THE NOAHIC COVENANT

Background

- The Noahic Covenant comes within the context of the Great Flood
- After the fall of man, wickedness grew greatly upon the earth, to the point that God was sorry that He had made man

Genesis 6:5-6 ~ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

Genesis 6:11-12 ~ Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

- This is one of the greatest statements in Scripture on the depravity and wickedness of sinful men
- As a result, God determined to blot out man, animals, creeping things, and birds from the face of the earth

Genesis 6:7 ~ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

- But in contrast to rest of mankind, Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord...God determined to spare Noah and his family, and to use them to preserve birds and animals that would be used to re-populate the earth

Genesis 6:8 ~ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

- Noah would be the instrument through which God's kingdom plan would play out...he would be much like Adam (a second Adam) in that Noah was the new representative of humanity through whom God's purposes would proceed

The Promise of the Covenant

- The first mention of the covenant between God and Noah occurs in Genesis 6:17-22
- It is a prediction of the covenant that will be established with Noah after the flood
- God is about to destroy the whole earth by flood, but He assures Noah that he, his family, and two of every kind of animal will be preserved in the ark

Genesis 6:18 ~ But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.

- Shortly after the promise of the covenant, the floodwaters came

Genesis 7:11-12 ~ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

- This flood was essentially a reversal of creation...one in which the creative process is reversed
- The results were catastrophic

Genesis 7:23 ~ Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.

- After being in the ark for over a year, Noah and his family exited the ark to find a dry earth
- Noah worshipped God by offering sacrifices of every kind of clean bird and animal
- In response, God promised that as long as the earth remained, there would be a regular order of day and night and of seasons
- By this regular order man would be able to plant and harvest without fear that another flood would destroy the earth

Genesis 8:21-22 ~ The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease."

- The actual covenant with Noah occurs in Genesis 9:8-17
- Notice that God's role as the initiator and authority for the covenant is reasserted five times in vs. 12, 13, 15, 16, 17
- Three different groups are the recipients of the covenant promise from God:
 - Noah and his descendants, which includes every successive generation after him, or all mankind (vs. 9)
 - All the living creatures that were with Noah on the ark (vs. 10)
 - The earth itself (vs. 13), since the whole earth was destroyed by the flood
- It is an everlasting covenant, a phrase which we will also see used to described other covenants
- The covenant remains in force as long as the earth remains
- In this covenant, God promised to preserve the stability of nature
- It guaranteed that nature would operate in a uniform fashion and provided the opportunity to function without the threat of global catastrophe
- Up until the flood, there had been no rainfall upon the earth...instead, "a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground" (Gen 2:6)
- Noah and his immediate descendants needed assurance that, when clouds formed and rain came forth from them in the future, the entire world would not be destroyed as it had been.
- **While this covenant was a blessing to all creation, it also allowed for God's kingdom and salvation plans to unfold in history**
- **Thus, the Noahic Covenant functioned as the platform for God's plans to play out**

- **It is also provided the basis for the future biblical covenants**
- **The certainty of later covenants between God and His people is rooted in the order of nature promised in the Noahic Covenant**

Jeremiah 33:20-21 ~ “Thus says the LORD, 'If you can break My covenant for the day, and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers.’”

Isaiah 54:9-10 ~ “For this is like the days of Noah to Me; when I swore that the waters of Noah should not flood the earth again, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor will I rebuke you. For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,” says the LORD who has compassion on you.

- One critical element of the Noahic Covenant was the establishment of human government and the institution of capital punishment for those guilty of murdering God’s image-bearers

Genesis 9:5-6 ~ Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

The Sign of the Covenant

Genesis 9:13-14, 16 ~ I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud... When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.

- As a sign of this covenant, the rainbow is a visible, repeatable phenomena that serves to remind God of the covenant that He has made with all the earth, never to destroy the earth again by flood
- The rainbow should also serve to remind us of what God did in destroying the whole earth because of its wickedness, and of His mercy towards us through His promise not to do it again

The Connection to the Abrahamic Covenant

- The Noahic Covenant sets the scene for the Abrahamic Covenant
- Noah had 3 sons: Shem, Ham, Japheth
- The descendants of Shem are listed in Genesis 10:21-31
- The specific line of Shem leading to Abraham is listed in Genesis 11:10-26
- These were the “Semites,” those people from whom the Israelite nation would come
- Also, the description of the nations (Genesis 10) and the rebelliousness of the nations at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) seen in their failure to scatter abroad over the face of the earth and their desire to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11:4)
- “Nations, therefore, are an important part of God’s kingdom purposes. What occurs at Babel is not just a ‘failure and punishment, but of God’s intended will for the diversity of nations from creation...’ Nations have a positive role in the eternal state... grasping a proper connection between Genesis 10-11 and Genesis 12 is important. The Table of Nations is the context from which Abraham and the nation Israel will occur. Genesis 10-11 provides the context for Israel to be the platform for universal blessings. God’s purposes for the nation Israel are not simply for the benefit of Israel alone. God uses Israel as a vessel to bless all people groups.”⁴

⁴ Vlach, *He Will Reign*, 79.