

# HEAVEN’S KINGDOM

## SESSION 4

### BIG PICTURE

King, Subjects, Realm – God, man, a place to meet

<i>Realm</i>	Creation	Genesis 1:1
	Flood	Genesis 7:4
<i>Subjects</i>	Babel	Genesis 11:4
	Abrahamic Covenant	Genesis 12:3
	Israel	Exodus 19:6
<i>King</i>	<b>David</b>	<b>2 Samuel 7:12-13</b>
	<b>CHRIST</b>	<b>Luke 1:32-33</b>
<i>Subjects</i>	Church	1 Peter 2:9
	Gospel	Galatians 3:8
	New Humanity	Galatians 3:28
<i>Realm</i>	Fire	2 Peter 3:11-13
	New Creation	Revelation 21:1

### CONTINUITIES AND REFERENTIAL ENTITIES

A referent serves to point to a greater or future reality, but this does not in any way deny or devalue the historical reality of the referent (see Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:1, 5; 10:1). Christ pointing to Himself as the ultimate temple, does not diminish the historicity of Solomon’s temple, for instance. This principle should prove very helpful and useful when seeking to understand phases of God’s progressive revelation or the unfolding of ultimate realities through increasingly glorious pictures.

Examples include the tabernacle, the temple, and Christ (there will be no temple in heaven because it pointed to Christ; see Revelation 21:22). So also, Canaan (“Promised Land”), the kingdom of Israel, and the kingdom of heaven.

## A KINGDOM OF REDEMPTION

The principles of “kingdom” enrich our understanding of the gospel. It involves authority, order, and dominion. It supremely focuses on the King, His people, and His realm.

- Mark 1:14–15** - Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, [15] and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God** is at hand; repent and believe in the **gospel**.”
- Luke 4:43** - but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; **for I was sent for this purpose**.”

**Luke 19:10** - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

**Matthew 4:23** - And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the **gospel of the kingdom** and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

**Luke 8:1** - Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, **proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God**. And the twelve were with him,

**Romans 1:16–17** - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

**Matthew 10:5–7** - These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, [6] but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. [7] And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.’

**Matthew 24:14** - And this **gospel of the kingdom** will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

**Daniel 2:44** - And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever

**Ephesians 5:5** - For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the **kingdom of Christ and God**.

## RESTORING OF ALL THINGS

**Acts 3:19–21** - Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, [20] that **times of refreshing may come** from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, [21] whom heaven must receive **until the time for restoring all the things** about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

**Acts 8:12** - But when they believed Philip as **he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women.

**Acts 8:35** - Then Philip opened his mouth, and **beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus**.

**Acts 20:21–25** - **testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**. [22] And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, [23] except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. [24] But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, **to testify to the gospel of the grace of God**. [25] And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about **proclaiming the kingdom** will see my face again.

**Ac 28:28–31** - [28] Therefore let it be known to you **that this salvation of God** has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” [30] He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, [31]

proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

## PARADISE

Paradise “is a loan-word from the Middle Iranian *pardez* (Avestan *pairidaêza*, an encircling wall, circular enclosure, garden), and means a garden, park or paradise. Xen. uses the word of the public gardens of the Persian kings and nobles” (NIDNTT, 760-61).

Lk 23:43 - [43] And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, **today you will be with me in Paradise.**” <sup>ESV</sup>

Re 2:7 - [7] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is **in the paradise of God.**’

## A PLACE

John 14:1–3 - “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. [2] In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?** [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, **that where I am you may be also.**

John 17:24 - Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

## A COUNTRY

Heb 11:14 - [14] For people who speak thus make it clear that they are **seeking a homeland.** <sup>ESV</sup>

Heb 11:16 - [16] But as it is, **they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.** Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. <sup>ESV</sup>

## A CITY

Heb 11:10 - [10] For he was **looking forward to the city** that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. <sup>ESV</sup>

Heb 11:16 - [16] But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **he has prepared for them a city.** <sup>ESV</sup>

Heb 13:14 - [14] For here we have no lasting city, but **we seek the city that is to come.** <sup>ESV</sup>

“Cities have buildings, culture, art, music, athletics, goods and services, events of all kinds. And, of course, cities have people engaged in activities, gatherings, conversations, and work.” (Alcorn, 78).

## NEW JERUSALEM

Heb 12:22–24 - [22] But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, [23] and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in

heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, [24] and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.<sup>ESV</sup>

**Ga 4:26** - [26] But **the Jerusalem above** is free, and she is our mother.<sup>ESV</sup>

**Re 3:12** - [12] The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the **name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem**, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.<sup>ESV</sup>

**Re 21:2** - [2] And **I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.<sup>ESV</sup>

## HEALING

The healing miracles were not merely to increase the quality of temporary life under the curse, it was fundamentally significant to point to eternal life redeemed from the curse; life without the curse on the ground that the consequence of sin has been dealt with in Christ. No more sin, no more curse is thus dramatized in miraculous healing and deliverance from evil.

**Matthew 12:28** - But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

**2 Timothy 4:18** - The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## SALVATION

**Luke 18:18–26** - And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” [19] And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. [20] You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’ ” [21] And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” [22] When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” [23] But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. [24] Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! [25] For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person **to enter the kingdom of God.**” [26] Those who heard it said, “**Then who can be saved?**”

**John 3:3–5** - Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” [4] Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” [5] Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

## INHERITANCE OF SALVATION

**Ephesians 5:5** - For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), **has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

**1 Peter 1:3–5** - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] **to an inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith **for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

## CHRIST'S RETURN

**2 Timothy 4:1** - I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and **by his appearing and his kingdom**:

**Revelation 12:10** - And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the **salvation** and the power and the **kingdom** of our God and the authority of his Christ **have come**, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

## RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ affords the only hope of true life—life without tears, pain, sorrow, disease, decay, and death. An incorruptible, imperishable inheritance that is undefiled and unfading. But the glory of this inheritance has become obscured through the fog of unbiblical thought and the lulling comforts of modernity in such a way that the church has largely forgotten the fullness of the hope availed in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## CHRIST: FIRST FRUITS

**1 Corinthians 15:20** - But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, **the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

**1 Corinthians 15:23** - But each in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

**Luke 24:39** - See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. **For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."**

## OURS

**1 Corinthians 15:21–22** - For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

**Job 19:25–27** - For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. [26] And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, [27] whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

**1 John 3:1–2** - See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. [2] Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; **but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.**

**Philippians 3:20–21** - But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

**Romans 8:23** - And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, **groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**

**Romans 8:30** - And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and **those whom he justified he also glorified.**

The resurrection is linked to heaven:

**Matthew 22:30** - For in the **resurrection** they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in **heaven.**

## A KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

**2 Peter 3:13** - But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth **in which righteousness dwells.**

**Revelation 21:27** - But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Isaiah 60:21** - Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

**Matthew 6:9–10** - Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. [10] Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

**Matthew 6:33** - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

## GOD'S GLORY

**Isaiah 40:5** - And **the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,** and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

**Numbers 14:21** - But truly, as I live, and as all **the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD,**

**Psalms 85:9** - Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, **that glory may dwell in our land.**

**Ezekiel 43:2** - And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.

**Isaiah 6:3** - And one called to another and said: "**Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!**"

**Psalms 72:19** - Blessed be his glorious name forever; **may the whole earth be filled with his glory!** Amen and Amen!

**Habakkuk 2:14** - **For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.**

# A KINGDOM OF RELATIONSHIPS

**Revelation 21:3–4** - And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

## PRESENCE OF GOD

**Ezekiel 48:35** - ... the name of the city from that time on shall be, **The LORD Is There.**”

The concept of heaven has more to do with **presence** than with a **place**.

It centers on **Christ** not **creation**. The Giver is greater than all His gifts. To experience unmediated awe and delight in God is far greater than the total summation of the highest experiences that any creation could afford.

**Matthew 6:9** - Pray then like this: “**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.**”

**Isaiah 63:15** - Look down from heaven and see, **from your holy and beautiful habitation**. Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me.

God is everywhere, but heaven is where He is pleased to reveal Himself most clearly and fully.

***John Owen:** “The reason why God is said to be in heaven is, **not because his essence is included in a certain place so called, but because of the more eminent manifestations of his glory there.**”*

**Heb 9:24** - [24] For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but **into heaven itself**, now to appear **in the presence of God** on our behalf. <sup>ESV</sup>

**Mt 18:10** - [10] “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. **For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.**”

**Re 21:3** - [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, **the dwelling place of God** is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and **God himself will be with them as their God.**” <sup>ESV</sup>

## DESIRE TO BE WITH GOD

**Ps 73:25–26** - [25] **Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.** [26] **My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** <sup>ESV</sup>

**Ps 27:4** - [4] One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

**Mt 5:8** - [8] "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." <sup>ESV</sup>

**1 Co 13:12** - [12] For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>ESV</sup>

**Re 22:4** - [4] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>ESV</sup>

**Ps 27:4** - [4] One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. <sup>ESV</sup>

**Re 22:4** - [4] They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>ESV</sup>

"it is where human happiness is at last made perfect" (Donnelly, 81).

**Ps 16:11** - [11] You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. <sup>ESV</sup>

## CHRIST

**John 14:3** - And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

And this is enough for my everlasting soul.

**John 17:24** - Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

**Luke 23:43** - And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

"It is interesting that the New Testament nowhere speaks of believers going 'to heaven' when they die. Instead, they go to be 'with Christ'." (Donnelly, 81).

## What or who is the attraction of heaven?

**Philippians 1:23** - I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

**2 Corinthians 5:8** - Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

**1 Peter 1:8** - Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

**Hebrews 11:1** - Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

**John 20:29** - Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."



**Job 19:25–26** - For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. [26] And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,

**Isaiah 33:17** - Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar.

There will be nothing there so glorious as the Lord of glory Himself, the source and fountain of all glory—goodness, delight, love, righteousness, holiness. There is no moving on to other things.

**Revelation 21:23** - And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

**Philippians 1:21** - For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

**Philippians 3:7–8** - But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ