God's Kingdom — an Overview

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(Note: All underlining of Scripture quotations for emphasis has been added by the author.)

1. The concept of God's kingdom pervades the entire biblical narrative.
   Graeme Goldsworthy, in his book *Gospel and Kingdom*, explains that "the Kingdom of God involves: (a) God's people, (b) in God's place, (c) under God's rule."[1] As such, the kingdom is closely tied to the various <u>covenants</u> that God initiates and which define the relationship between him and his people.
   Goldsworthy continues:

   > We first see the Kingdom of God in the Garden of Eden. Here Adam and Eve live in willing obedience to the [word and rule of God]. … the Kingdom is destroyed by the sin of man — and the rest of the Bible is about the restoration of a people [who are willingly under God's rule].[2]

   The fundamental blessing is for a nation and its people to belong to God and enjoy his friendship.
   This is reflected in the basic promise, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (or similar).
   See Genesis 17:7-8; Exodus 6:7; 29:45; Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33; 32:38; Ezekiel 11:20; 34:24; 37:23; Zechariah 8:8; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10; Revelation 21:3.
2. Although God's kingdom often denotes the nation and people who uniquely belong to him (e.g., Ps 114:2; 1Chr 28:5), it can also refer to his world-wide dominion.
   And so, we find the Psalmists (a) celebrating God's present rule over the nations, and (b) anticipating the nations turning to him. See Psalm 22:27-28; 47:7-9; 67:3-4; 86:9; 96:7-10; 97:1; 99:1-3; 103:19.
   God's universal reign is seen in the way he continually upholds the world order established in creation — both the physical and the moral orders (Ps 93:1-4; 96:10; 119:89-91).[3]
3. Man was created as God's image-bearer — to <u>represent</u> God, to <u>reflect</u> his glory, and to <u>relate</u> to him.
   Granted dominion, he was to rule on God's behalf (Gen 1:26-27).
   In his intellectual and moral capacities, he was to reflect some of God's own glory.
   From Eden his descendants were to spread out to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28).

[1] Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy: Gospel and Kingdom; Gospel and Wisdom; The Gospel in Revelation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2009), pp. 53-54.
[2] Goldsworthy, *Trilogy*, p. 54.
[3] Accordingly, when evil prevails and the moral order collapses, the world's "foundations" are viewed as having been undermined (Ps 11:3; 82:5; cf. Ps 75:3).

The whole world thus tamed and harnessed and filled with holy people would become a theater for displaying God's glory. A sort of temple, with people serving as priests in God's presence.[4]

4. The entry of sin meant that Man's efforts would now be frustrated (Genesis 3).
   His thinking and behavior would present, at best, a highly distorted image of God (Rom 3:23).
   Jesus alone would truly bear that image (Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).
   And only through Jesus would dominion be finally restored (Heb 2:5-9).
   Yet through God's Spirit that image is now being restored in us (2Cor 3:18; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).
5. After the judgment of the Flood, God promised to never again destroy the world on account of Man's sin.
   Henceforth the world's regularity will allow for the outworking of God's redemptive purposes (Gen 8:21-22).
6. God's promises to Abraham were, to all intents, promises relating to his kingdom.
   ("God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.")
   Abraham's descendants would become a great nation (Gen 12:2; 13:16; 15:5).
   They will inherit the Promised Land (Gen 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:8).
   They will be God's own people, living under his rule (Gen 17:7-8; 18:19; cf. Gen 26:5).
   Moreover, through his descendants other nations will also be blessed (Gen 12:2-3; 22:18).
   These promises anticipate the Israelite monarchy and empire: kings will come from Abraham's line (Gen 17:6, 16; cf. Gen 35:11); the nation will "possess the gate of their enemies" (Gen 22:17, MEV).
   God's promises to Abraham and to his "seed" concerning an inheritance, a special relationship, dominion, and of mediating blessing to the nations (e.g., Gen 13:15; 17:7-8; 22:17-18), had ultimate reference to one person, one unique Seed — Jesus (Gal 3:16, 19, MEV).
   These promises are fulfilled through the gospel:
   All nations are Christ's inheritance and are blessed as they turn to him (Rom 4:13; Gal 3:8, 14).
   Faith joins us to Jesus and makes us children of Abraham and of God (Rom 4:9-25; 9:8; Gal 3:26-29).
7. Through Moses, God began to activate his promises made to the patriarchs (Ex 2:24; 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 6:2-5).
   Concerning their enslavement and miraculous deliverance, and why God took so long to fulfill his promises, Goldsworthy comments:

   > Israel was brought to Egypt and the patriarchs never possessed the land, because God intended to reveal the way into his Kingdom. It is a way involving a miraculous redemption from a bondage that holds us and keeps us out of the Kingdom. Only a miracle of God can bring us back to the Kingdom. The Exodus will remain now the key model for the understanding of redemption in the life of Israel, and the people of God will be made to recall it as the basis of their response to a God who saves (see Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 6:20-25; 26:5-10; Joshua 24:6-13; Nehemiah 9:6-12; Psalms 78, 105, 106, 114, 135 and 136).[5]

   And so, in the events of the Exodus, Yahweh delivered his people from slavery and <u>redeemed</u> them "with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment" (Ex 6:6; cf. Dt 4:34; 5:15; 26:8).
8. At the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites celebrated Yahweh's power displayed in Pharaoh's destruction (Ex 15:1-18).[6] Hearing of this victory, the surrounding nations will tremble with fear in view of their own certain defeat (Ex 15:14-16; cf. Jos 2:9-11).
   God was leading his people to his holy mountain-sanctuary — <u>a symbolic return to Eden</u> (Ex 15:13, 17).
   Yahweh's victory, and the fulfillment of his purposes, demonstrates his reign over the world (Ex 15:18).

[4] See Numbers 14:21 (ESV); Psalm 72:19; Isaiah 6:3. Eden itself served as God's original temple/mountain-sanctuary (Eze 28:13-14).
[5] Goldsworthy, *Trilogy*, pp. 72-73.
[6] God's personal name, Yahweh ("the LORD"), appears ten times in this Song.

9. The events at Sinai established Israel as God's holy people, marking a new phase in the progress of his kingdom. Israel became Yahweh's "sanctuary" and "dominion" (Ps 114:1-2), bound to him as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6).
10. As their king, God gave them his law to regulate their conduct.
    Far from being the means for earning his favor, God gave his law to show what it means to be his people.
    Note the preface to the Ten Commandment (Ex 20:2) — they are already his people, saved by grace!
    Goldsworthy comments:

    > [The people] cannot know how to live consistently with their calling in life as Jehovah's people unless he tells them. What he does tell them reflects in various ways his own character. It is their faithful response to the character of God that will demonstrate that they are his children.[7]

    Concerning Israel as God's "sanctuary" and "dominion" (Psalm 114:2), Spurgeon notes:

    > The meaning of the passage is that the whole people at the coming out of Egypt were separated unto the Lord to be a peculiar people, a nation of priests whose motto should be, "Holiness unto the Lord." Judah was the Lord's "holy thing," set apart for his special use. The nation was peculiarly Jehovah's dominion, for it was governed by a theocracy in which God alone was King. It was his domain in a sense in which the rest of the world was outside his kingdom. … The whole people were the shrine of Deity, and their camp was one great temple.[8]

11. In the desert, craftsmen constructed the tabernacle and its furnishings (Exodus 36 – 38).
    The tabernacle symbolized that God dwelt in the midst of his people (Ex 25:8; 29:44-46; cf. Lev 26:11).
    Its inner sanctuary (the Most Holy Place) housed the Ark.
    God (symbolically) sat enthroned between (or above) the cherubim on the Ark (Ps 80:1; 99:1; 1Sam 4:4; 2Sam 6:2; Isa 37:16).
    The tabernacle/temple and its Ark served as God's royal "footstool" — linking his heavenly throne with the earthly (1Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 132:7; Isa 60:13; Lam 2:1; Eze 43:7).
12. Israel's Feast of Tabernacles (or Ingathering) anticipated the ultimate conversion of the nations to Israel's God. Seventy bulls were sacrificed to make atonement for the 70 nations of the world (Num 29:12-38; cf. Genesis 10) — in anticipation of their final ingathering into God's kingdom (Zec 14:16-19).[9]
13. In Cannan, the Israelites were to finally enjoy "rest" — where they could settle down, safe and secure from their enemies (Dt 12:9-10; 25:19; Jos 1:13; 23:1).
    God later chose David and his heirs so that Israel might dwell in safety, free from oppression (2Sam 7:8-11).
    Joshua's leading the people into the Promised Land anticipated the salvific work of Jesus, who grants his people salvation-rest and leads them into their eternal inheritance (Mt 11:28-30; Heb 4:1-11).
14. Joshua near Jericho encountered "the commander of the army of the LORD."
    This Commander, who led the armies of heaven, had now come to take charge of Israel (Jos 5:13-15).
    Israel was God's earthly army and agent of wrath against the Canaanites.[10]
    All this foreshadowed Jesus' work of bringing judgment on Satan and his kingdom (Jn 12:31; Rev 19:11ff.).

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[7] Goldsworthy, *Trilogy*, p. 75. Under the New Covenant too, obedience is not the basis for our acceptance but rather the fruit of it. Acceptance with God is solely on the basis of Christ's death and perfect obedience. But equally, we must respond to God's grace with love and gratitude and holy lives that reflect his own goodness (1Pet 1:15-16; Lev 19:2).

[8] Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David,* Exposition of Psalm 114. Via the Spurgeon Archive website: https://archive.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps114.php#expo.

[9] See David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Tyler, TX: Reconstruction Press, 1985), p. 45.

[10] Israel's role as God's agent of wrath was acknowledged by the Canaanite king Adoni-Bezek, in Judges 1:4-7.

15. Under David and Solomon, Israel enjoyed a foretaste of the ultimate messianic kingdom.
    The Lord "gave victory to David wherever he went"; nearby nations became subject to him (2Sam 8:1-14).
    David "administered justice and equity to all his people" and appointed capable leaders to maintain order (2Sam 8:15-17). He showed "the kindness of God" to Jonathan's crippled son (2Sam 9:3), but took decisive action when his kindness was rebuffed by a neighboring king (2 Samuel 10).[11]
    Solomon, from the outset, enjoyed the submission of all the nations that David had conquered (1Kgs 4:21).
    The "perfection" of his reign — his extensive rule; the people's happiness and safety (1Kgs 4:20, 25); his fame, wisdom, and justice (1Kgs 4:29-34); God's presence in their midst in the temple — similarly came to typify the final messianic kingdom (e.g., Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-9; 16:5; Jer 23:5-6; Eze 37:24-28; Mic 4:4; Zec 3:10).
16. 1 Chronicles 28:5:

    "… [The LORD} has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel."

    1 Chronicles 29:23:

    Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father.

    A Davidic king ruled as God's "son", on God's throne, over God's kingdom (1Chr 17:13-14; 2Chr 9:8; Ps 2:7; 45:6). In other words, God's rule over his people was mediated through his earthly representative.
    As Yahweh's "co-rulers", the Davidic kings foreshadowed the final, messianic Ruler:
    Aided by Yahweh, Messiah's rule will extend from Zion until all opposition is crushed (Psalms 2, 110).
17. The visions in Daniel of the statue (chap. 2) and of the beasts (chap. 7) depict the period of Gentile dominion over (and oppression of) God's people that would end with the coming of the Messiah.
    The four successive Gentile kingdoms were: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.[12]
    During the time of the 4th kingdom (Rome) God's own kingdom will be established.
    God's kingdom will shatter and put an end to all these Gentile kingdoms, but will itself endure forever and expand to fill the whole world (Dan 2:34-35, 44).
    Dominion will be granted to "one like a son of man" and to the saints (Dan 7:13-14, 18, 22, 27).
18. First-century Jews longed for the definitive deliverance that the Messiah would bring.
    Under foreign control, they viewed themselves as essentially still in exile and under God's judgment.
    So Gabriel came to Mary, bringing the good news that Jesus was the promised King who would deliver God's people and usher in the eternal kingdom (Mt 1:21; Lk 1:32-33).
    The "songs" of Mary, Zechariah and Simeon reveal their deep faith in God and his promises; each one understood that through Jesus, OT prophecies relating to Israel's salvation were soon to be realized.
    God was about to:
    - fulfill his covenant promises to Abraham (Lk 1:54-55, 72-73).
    - "visit" and redeem his people (Lk 1:68; cf. Ex 4:31).
    - deliver Israel from her enemies (Lk 1:71, 74), and from the darkness and death of foreign oppression (Lk 1:79; cf. Isa 9:2).
    - provide salvation through the forgiveness of sins (Lk 1:77).
    - accomplish his promised end-time salvation — for Gentiles as well as Jews (Lk 2:30-32; cf. Isa 49:6).

[11] "Kindness" in 2 Samuel 9:1, 3, 7 translates the Hebrew word *ḥeseḏ* (Strong's H2617), often used in reference to Yahweh's own "steadfast love" (e.g., Ex 34:6-7; Ps 103:8, 11, 17). David sought also to show such *ḥeseḏ* to King Hanun (2Sam 10:2).
David's kindness to Mephibosheth seems to anticipate a particular focus on the healing of lame persons as a sign or marker of God's kingdom — both in the prophets as they anticipate the kingdom, and in the New Testament with the kingdom's arrival.
See Isaiah 35:6; Jeremiah 31:8; Micah 4:6-7; Zephaniah 3:19; Matthew 11:5; 15:30-31; 21:14; Acts 3:1-10; 8:7.
[12] The depiction of these kingdoms (in Daniel 7) as predatorial beasts no doubt relates to their brutal, imperialistic nature.

Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25) — a reference to the comfort that the Messiah would bring to God's people when he restored their fortunes (e.g., Isa 40:1-2; 49:13; 51:3, 52:9).
And Anna spoke of the Christ-child to those in the temple who were eagerly awaiting "the redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38; cf. Isa 52:9; Lk 1:68; 24:21).

19. After more than 400 years of silence God again spoke to Israel — through John the Baptist.
John was the prophesied "messenger" and "Elijah" sent to turn God's people from sin so as to avert his wrath (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6; Lk 1:17). Like Malachi, John tied Messiah's coming to the nation's sifting, whereby the wicked would be judged and the righteous vindicated (Mt 3:7-12; cf. Mal 3:1 – 4:6).
The arrival of the King and his kingdom brought about a crisis for the nation:
Each person needed to repent and align himself with the kingdom's values.
In particular, the religious leaders were given notice, as it were, that their jobs were on the line.[13]
R.C. Sproul comments concerning this:

> The New Testament views the incarnation of Jesus as a time of *crisis*. The English word *crisis* comes from (and is a transliteration of) the Greek word *krisis*, the New Testament word for "judgment." The coming of the Messiah is directly linked to the impending judgment of Israel. John called the nation to repentance and to cleansing by baptism because the Jews were not ready for this crisis, the "visitation" of God in the person of the heavenly Judge, the Son of Man. This visitation was a two-edged sword, a time of redemption for those who welcomed his coming and a time of judgment for those who rejected him.[14]

20. With Jesus' advent and ministry, the kingdom of God was "at hand" (Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7).
His healing ministry and exorcisms demonstrated the kingdom's arrival (Lk 7:21-22; 11:20).
In John 2, the miraculous provision of wine showed that Jesus was the one inaugurating the kingdom.
The large jars were for ceremonial washings (Jn 2:6) — for ritual cleansings to prepare for the coming kingdom. But here the water gives way to the wine of the kingdom: the anticipated messianic banquet has come in Jesus! (See Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:29; 14:15-24; Isaiah 25:6).
Jesus' ministry fulfilled many of Isaiah's prophecies. Israel's spiritual dullness was one of the prophet's chief concerns (Isa 6:9-10; 29:9-10), but in the messianic age God would finally heal the nation's blindness and deafness (Isa 29:17-24; 32:1-4; 35:5; 42:7). And so, we see spiritual and physical healing linked together in Jesus' ministry (Mk 2:5; Lk 4:18; 7:22).

21. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ and Son of God, Jesus called him the "rock" upon which the Church would be built (Mt 16:18). Peter was granted "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 16:19) — to admit or deny entry into God's kingdom.
Peter employed these keys when he proclaimed God's kingdom and the conditions for entry — to the Jews at Pentecost, to the Samaritans, and to the Gentiles at Caesarea (Ac 2:14ff.; 8:14ff.; 10:34ff.).
The authority to bind or loose — to exercise church discipline — will be the prerogative of all the apostles and of church leaders generally (Mt 18:17-18; Jn 20:23).[15]

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[13] The crisis brought by Jesus helps explain some of his cryptic teaching — for example, the need to rightly interpret the times and act accordingly (Lk 12:54-59), and the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Lk 16:1-9).
[14] R.C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998; new edition 2015), pp. 82-83.
[15] "You" in Matthew 18:18 is plural, whereas in Matthew 16:19 it is singular throughout.

22. Though present with Jesus, God's kingdom would only "come with power" after a considerable delay — albeit before that generation had all passed on (Mk 9:1; cf. Mt 16:28; Lk 21:31-32).
    And so we see Jesus, approaching Jerusalem for the last time, seeking to counter the people's (false) expectation that the kingdom would dramatically appear as soon as he entered the city (Lk 19:11).
    His Parable of the Ten Minas (Lk 19:12-27) shows the king returning to reign only after a lengthy absence:
    He would leave for a distant country (heaven) to receive his kingdom before returning to reign (19:12).
    Prior to leaving he will commission his servants to work for his cause during his absence (19:13).
    Upon his return the faithful will share with their Lord in the administration of the kingdom (19:16-19).
    But his enemies who rejected his rule will be executed (19:14, 27) — a reference to the Jews in AD 70.
    Despite Jesus' warning, the people welcomed him into Jerusalem as their king (Mt 21:9; Mk 11:10; Lk 19:38).
    A few days later they disowned him; they wanted a Messiah who would deliver them from Roman rule.[16]
23. The activity and descent of God's Spirit were signs of the kingdom's arrival (Mt 12:28; Acts 2).
    The Pentecost tongues — the miraculous declaration of God's praises in diverse human languages — powerfully affirmed God's intention to gather all nations into his kingdom.
    A reversal of the confusion and dispersal at Babel (Gen 11:1-9; cf. Zeph 3:9).
    This unity under God will fulfill his promise of blessing to the nations through Abraham (Gen 12:3).
24. God's kingdom advances as people hear, understand, and believe the "word" (Mt 13:19, 23), "gospel" (Mt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14), or "good news" (Lk 4:43; 8:1; 16:16) of the kingdom. By which is meant the message that in Jesus, God's kingdom has finally come (Ac 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).
    That Jesus, having dealt with sin, now co-rules with the Father (1Cor 15:1-4; Ac 2:30-36; Rev 11:15).
    The gospel calls people to recognize that fact — to confess him as Lord and as God (Rom 10:9; Php 2:9-11), and to submit to his rule through repentance expressed in baptism (Mt 3:2; 4:17; 28:18-20; Ac 2:37-38).
25. God's kingdom is of a spiritual-moral nature rather than political or external.
    The Pharisees sought an earthly kingdom, like that under David and Solomon, but Jesus utterly repudiated this notion:

    > 20 *… "The kingdom of God does not come with observation.*
    > 21 *Nor will they say, 'Here it is!' or 'There it is!' For remember, the kingdom of God is <u>within you</u>."*
    > (Luke 17:20-21, MEV).[17]

    To be sure, Jesus is enthroned in heaven, and he rules the nations.
    Yet here he emphasizes the spiritual/moral nature of his rule.
    Jesus rules us via his word and Spirit: the kingdom involves godly living and obedience (Rom 14:17; Col 2:6).
    We confess him as Lord — as God, and as <u>our</u> king. Thus, the kingdom has its throne in human hearts.
    As Christians we are incorporated into this kingdom (Col 1:13).
    Apart from spiritual new birth one can neither perceive nor enter the kingdom (Jn 3:3, 5).
    Our kingdom "weapons" involve persuasion and reasoned arguments (2Cor 10:4-5; cf. Jn 18:36).

[16] The large crowd that followed Jesus from Jericho and who acclaimed him upon his entry into Jerusalem (Mt 20:29 – 21:11) were clearly motivated by an expectation that he would promptly take the reins of government and deliver them from Roman oppression. A similar expectation is evident in Mrs Zebedee's request concerning her sons' leading roles in the coming kingdom (Mt 20:20-21). All these were anticipating an earthly, political kingdom.

[17] The Greek term Luke employs here is *entos* (Strong's G1787), rightly translated as "within" by the MEV, KJV, and NIV(1984). The term occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Matthew 23:26, where it clearly denotes "inside" as opposed to "outside". Had Luke intended "midst" (ESV, NASB), he would very likely have employed the Greek adjective *mesos* (Strong's G3319) instead.

26. The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32) shows that from small and humble beginnings God's kingdom will grow to fill the whole world.
    The related Parable of the Yeast (Mt 13:33) shows how God's kingdom brings blessing by permeating and transforming the surrounding culture.
    So, while the kingdom is essentially personal and spiritual in nature, the conversion of individuals must inevitably lead to a transformation of the surrounding culture. In this way, too, the nations are blessed through the gospel.
27. Hebrews 12 relates the coming of God's kingdom to the prophecies of Haggai (Heb 12:26-28; Hag 2:6).
    In Haggai, the future glory of the temple is connected with Yahweh's promise to "once more … shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land … [and] all nations" (Hag 2:6-7).
    God first shook the world order when he gave Israel the law at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:18; Heb 12:26).
    At that time he broke into the darkness of the pagan world with the light of his law.
    But Haggai speaks of a further shaking and toppling of the world order (Hag 2:6-7, 21-22).[18]
    Of interest here is that the author of Hebrews (in 12:26-28) interprets Haggai's prophecy in terms of the coming of God's eternal New Covenant kingdom.
    He writes that the material order ("things that have been made") will be shaken and removed, so that the "kingdom that cannot be shaken" might remain (Heb 12:27-28).
    He is referring to the Mosaic order's provisional and typical entities — the Jerusalem temple with its priesthood, sacrifices and ceremonies — all now "obsolete" and "ready to vanish away" (Heb 8:13).
    But the unshakeable spiritual city and kingdom will remain (Heb 12:22, 28).[19]
    Note the references in Hebrews to fire and judgment (Heb 6:8; 10:27, 30, 39; 12:29) — all this connected with the fast-approaching "Day" and Jesus' imminent return (Heb 10:25, 37).
    These have obvious reference to the looming Jewish-Roman War and the fall of Jerusalem and its temple.
    Following Hebrews' lead, we should relate Haggai's "shaking" prophecies to the prophecies of Peter and John — to Peter's destruction of the old world by fire and the coming of the new creation (in 2 Peter 3), and to John's visions (in Revelation) of judgment and of the coming new world order under the rule of Christ.
    Both relate to the coming of God's kingdom in AD 70.
28. The remarkable progress of the gospel as related in the book of Acts — especially among the Gentiles — demonstrated the restoration (through Jesus) of David's throne and kingdom.
    David's throne was restored in Jesus' ascension to the heavenly Zion (Ac 2:30-36; cf. Ps 2:6; 110:1-2).
    Jesus' heavenly rule was manifested in his gospel conquest of the Gentiles (Ac 15:14-19; cf. Am 9:11-12).
    All of this is explained more fully in my article on this website: *The Throne of David — an Overview*.
29. The arrival of the kingdom is a major focus of the book of Revelation (11:15-17; 19:6).
    God is seated on his heavenly throne ruling the nations (4:9-10; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4; cf. Ps 47:8).
    Jesus is enthroned too (3:21; 7:17; 22:1, 3); he is the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16; cf. 1:5; 17:14).
    Revelation shows the fulfillment of Psalm 110: Messiah exerting his power to take possession of the Gentile nations, judging those who oppose his rule.
    He comes on the clouds (1:7) to put down his enemies: the Harlot (18:2-24), and the Beast and false prophet and their allies (19:11-21).
    The Devil is defeated (20:10); so too is Death — the last enemy (20:14; cf. 1Cor 15:25-26).

[18] Note, here, the associated messianic promise concerning Zerubbabel (Hag 2:23).
[19] Haggai's prophecy of the temple's future glory is fulfilled, in part, in the Church (Eph 2:21; 5:27; Heb 12:22-23; Rev 21:2ff.).

Revelation shows the kingdom finally arriving with the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet[20] — coinciding with the Resurrection and with the judgment of both the living (nations) and the dead:

> [15] *The seventh angel sounded [his trumpet], and there were loud voices in heaven, saying: "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."*
> [16] *And the twenty-four elders, who sat before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshipped God,*
> [17] *saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who is and was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and begun to reign.*
> [18] *The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time has come for the dead to be judged, and to reward Your servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."*
> (Revelation 11:15-18, MEV).

Recall that Revelation's visions concerned first-century events (1:1, 3; 22:6, 10).
Therefore, Jesus has come in his kingdom (Mt 16:28); the kingdom has come with power (Mk 9:1).
Jesus now rules the nations, in fulfillment of OT prophecy (Psalms 2, 72; Isa 11:1-10; Dan 7:13-14).
That's also what John's final vision is concerned to show:
The new heaven and new earth, with its capital "Jerusalem" (chaps. 21 – 22), depicts the post-70 AD world order, with the world's nations firmly under the rule and government of the ascended Lord Jesus (Ps 2:6-9; Rev 12:5; 19:15).
The New Jerusalem is where believers "live" under the New Covenant (Heb 12:22).
The saints themselves co-reign with Christ from Jerusalem (2:26-27; 5:10; 22:5; cf. Dan 7:18, 27).

30. Recall (from point 1) Graeme Goldsworthy's definition of the Kingdom:
"God's people, in God's place, under God's rule."
Revelation therefore shows the fulfillment and culmination of all God's purposes through Christ.
Jesus is the King!
His people live with him in "Jerusalem".
They do so under the terms of the New Covenant: their sins are forgiven.
The good news of the kingdom is that we can (and do) live under the rule of King Jesus.
31. Thus, God's kingdom has come — his eternal kingdom promised in the Old Testament.
Of this kingdom Jesus is (and will remain) the king-priest "forever" (Ps 110:1-4; Heb 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24).
And since he is king "forever" (2Sam 7:16; Ps 72:5; Isa 9:7; Dan 7:14; Lk 1:33; Rev 11:15), the world itself must continue on, if not literally forever, certainly for a very long time.
Sinners (on earth) will always need a priestly mediator to intercede for them (Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34; 1Jn 2:1).
32. Old Testament prophecies that refer to the reign of God (or the messianic king) from Mount Zion, with his people gathered into his presence and under his protection, should be interpreted as being fulfilled in the kingdom of God — the present gospel/kingdom/church age. Here are some examples:
Isaiah 4:2-6; 11:1-10; 24:23 – 25:10; 33:20-22; Jeremiah 3:17; Ezekiel 37:24-28; Joel 2:32; 3:17-21; Obadiah 1:21; Micah 4:6-7.

[20] Presumably this seventh trumpet is the one that Paul refers to that raises the dead (1Cor 15:52; 1Thes 4:16).

33. We conclude with the words of Psalm 145:10-13 (MEV):

> [10] *All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your godly ones shall bless You.*
> [11] *They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom and talk of Your power,*
> [12] *to make known to people His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.*
> [13] *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*

Appendix: Preterism and the Kingdom of God

The preterist view of the kingdom stands in stark contrast to traditional views:
Preterism affirms that God's eternal kingdom is here already, and that it doesn't need any future radical intervention (i.e., Jesus' return) for it to fully come.
Preterism holds to the following:

- That Jesus has inaugurated God's eternal, universal and righteous kingdom (Lk 1:32-33; cf. Isa 9:6-7).
- That in his ascension, the throne of David was fully restored (Ac 2:30-36).
- That Jesus rules the world from the heavenly Zion (Ps 2:6; 110:1-2; Dan 7:13-14; Mt 26:64).
- That the kingdom came "with power" in AD 70 (Mk 9:1; Mt 16:28; Rev 11:15-17).
  At that time Jesus exerted his power to subdue his enemies and take possession of the Gentile nations (Ps 110:5-6; Rev 11:15-18).
- That all nations are his reward and inheritance (Ps 2:8; Isa 49:4-7).
  He wins them to himself through the gospel (Mt 28:18-20; Ac 15:14-19 [= Am 9:11-12]; Rev 15:4).
  In this way God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled (Rom 4:13; Gal 3:8; cf. Gen 12:3; Ps 72:17).
- That Jesus continually disciplines rebellious leaders and nations with his "rod of iron" (Ps 2:9-12; Rev 12:5).
- That in John's vision of the new creation (Revelation 21 – 22) we see depicted the new post-70 AD world order that Jesus has brought about:
  Old Testament prophecies are shown to be fulfilled: Jerusalem has been restored, and God's people have been gathered into his presence therein (Rev 22:3-4).
  New Jerusalem (as the Church) serves as a light and ministers healing to the nations (Rev 21:24; 22:2).
  The wicked outside its walls are invited to repent and enter through its gates (Rev 22:14-15, 17).
  New Jerusalem is where believers "live" under the New Covenant (Heb 12:22).
- That Jesus remains a king-priest "forever" (Ps 110:4; Heb 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24), because the world itself will continue on for a very, very long time.
  Sinners (on earth) will always need a priestly mediator to intercede for them (Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34; 1Jn 2:1).