

The Good News

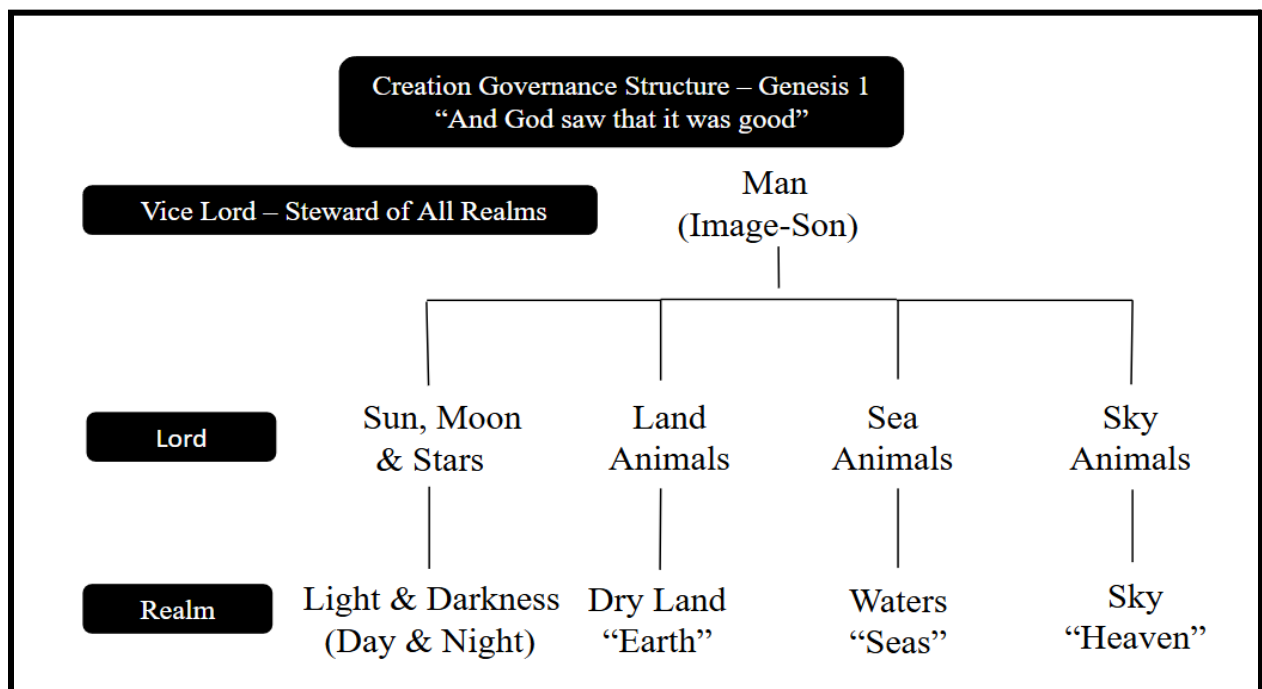
Illuminating the True Intent and Cosmic Scope of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Objective: *This resource is designed to provide a comprehensive, structured counternarrative to the common yet incomplete articulation of the gospel often presented by both the church and mainstream culture.*

In much of postmodern Western Christianity, the gospel has been reduced to a message centered primarily on individual salvation and going to a place called “heaven” after death. While personal salvation is undeniably central to the Christian faith, Scripture presents the gospel first and foremost as the royal announcement that God’s kingdom has arrived through Jesus the Messiah. To faithfully proclaim this “good news,” we must rightly understand the nature and scope of God’s kingdom, the manner in which Jesus inaugurated it through the major stages of His messianic work, and the cosmic restorative and redemptive purpose for which it was established.

Nature and Scope of God’s Kingdom

So what is *this* kingdom of God? Old Testament scholar Graeme Goldsworthy defines it as “God’s *people* in God’s *place* under God’s *rule and blessing*.” Goldsworthy notes that this tripartite formula is established in the Garden of Eden. A quick examination of Genesis 1, allowing Scripture to speak on its own terms, depicts the Lord establishing sovereign order and dominion over the primordial, unsettled chaos, delineating realms with designated rulers, all subject to man as His appointed vice lord and royal steward:



Genesis 3 then reveals the marring and disruption of this kingdom order and creational harmony through the emergence of sin at the “fall.” Beguiled by the serpent, man chooses an identity rooted in self-reliance and autonomous wisdom over full devotion to and dependence upon the Lord. The rest of the biblical narrative traces the disastrous effects of the kingdom’s disintegration wrought by man’s estrangement and alienation from God and the redemptive process designed to restore it. The Old Testament and the New Testament writers—and Jesus Himself—make it clear that this cosmic plan of renewal and restoration is centered in the life and story of Israel, as evidenced in three key truths:

1) Jesus is Abraham’s Seed

Promise	Fulfillment
➤ Genesis 12:1-3; Luke 1:72-73, 24:46-47	➤ Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:54-55; John 8:39-40, 52-59; Galatians 3:16

As one of Israel’s most revered patriarchs, Abraham occupies a central role in salvation history. Therefore, Jesus’ identification as Abraham’s true covenant heir reveals His clear self-understanding and conviction that He is the cherished, promised offspring through whom God’s covenant blessing would come to both Israel and the nations.

2) Jesus is David’s True Son

Promise	Fulfillment
➤ II Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 2, 72, 89, 110; Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-10; Jeremiah 23:5-6, 33:14-17; Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24-28; Micah 5:2-5; Zechariah 9:9-10, 12:10	➤ Matthew 1:1, 9:27, 15:22-23, 20:30-31, 21:9, 22:41-46; Luke 1:32-33; John 1:49, 12:13; Acts 2:29-36; Romans 1:3-4; II Timothy 2:8; Revelation 22:16

The Gospels and the broader New Testament consistently present Jesus as the true and ultimate Son of David—the promised Messianic King through whom God fulfills His covenant promises, restores His people, and establishes dominion and dynasty in His everlasting kingdom.

3) Jesus is True Israel

Promise	Fulfillment
➤ Exodus 4:22–23; Deuteronomy 8:2–3, 30:6; Isaiah 10, 41:8–9, 49:3–6, 50–53; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:25–27; Daniel 7:13–14; Hosea 11:1; Micah 2; Zephaniah 3	➤ Matthew 2:15, 3-4, 10:5-6, 15:24, 19:28; Luke 4:1-30, 22:28-30, 24:25-27

The Old Testament progressively anticipates a faithful representative who would embody Israel’s identity and calling, succeeding where the elect nation failed in its role as servant, witness, disciple, and son, and fulfill God’s covenant purposes. The Gospels present Jesus as this faithful and true Israel—the obedient Son on behalf of the nations and the cursed creation, who simultaneously relives, reshapes, and redefines Israel’s story, fulfilling its vocation, and inaugurating God’s promised restoration of the kingdom. Because Jesus’ identity, heritage, and mission are inextricably rooted in Israel’s election, history, promises, and hopes, He alone is qualified to take up their life and lot with integrity, fully assuming their role and record for the sake of ushering in a new human race and creational reality predicated on authentic human existence, not the mere absence of sin.

Method to His Majesty

With the nature and scope of the kingdom firmly defined, it is important to highlight that Jesus' inauguration of the kingdom of God, as well as the manner in which He accomplished this, must inform our understanding and communication of the gospel. Jesus Himself referenced, proclaimed, explained, or demonstrated the kingdom of God over 100 times in the four Gospels, revealing that the gospel is fundamentally about the arrival of God's reign through the Messiah (ref. Isaiah 52:7-10). The kingdom of God was not merely a favorite topic among many in Jesus' teaching and preaching—it was the central framework through which He understood, announced, and confirmed the completion of His mission. As evidence, each major stage of Jesus' messianic work strategically emphasized that "the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand" with active, cosmic renewal and restoration on vivid display:

Stage	Scriptural Evidence
Incarnation: The “inbreaking” of the kingdom commences with the arrival of the King Himself in the form of a babe. From the outset, every facet of His life stood in sharp contradiction to contemporary expectations of one possessing regal and exalted status—even His very birthplace, a lowly manger in Bethlehem. The incarnation not only marks Yahweh's advent, but also His promised return to Zion, as the glory of God once again comes to dwell among His covenant people—no longer in a temple made by human hands, but in the person of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, “God with us.”	Isaiah 7:11, 9:6; Ezekiel 43; Micah 5; Zechariah 8:3; Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2; John 1:14; Galatians 4:4
Life & Public Ministry: As the true Israelite, Jesus embodied and underwent every genuine aspect of human development and maturity, subjecting Himself to the same conditions and challenges common to humanity, including hunger, fatigue, pain, loss, and suffering. His noted “increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52) was sovereignly ordained, affirming His authentic humanity while simultaneously preparing Him for His public ministry. Events such as His baptism and subsequent wilderness testing were not incidental, but served to publicly reveal and confirm Him as the faithful and obedient Son of God. From the calling of the twelve disciples to His authoritative teaching among the masses to the intentional inclusivity of the kingdom, every action and event bore unmistakable witness that God had invaded the present evil age, inaugurating the new creation and establishing Christ Himself as its firstfruits. Moreover, His countless miracles were far more than attention-seeking spectacles; they functioned as signs to Israel that their long-awaited deliverance from captivity and exile had arrived, bringing with it healing, Jubilee, covenant renewal, and ultimate restoration.	Matthew 3:13-16, 4:1-11 and 12-17, 5-7, 10:1-4, 19:28; Mark 1:9-13, 2:1-12, 7:14-23; Luke 2:40-52, 3:21-22, 4:1-14, 6:12-16; John 4:7-26, 9:1-12; 14-16; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Hebrews 2:17-18, 4:15, 5:8

Stage	Scriptural Evidence
Death: As with His birth, Jesus’ death confounded His contemporaries because it fundamentally opposed and radically subverted prevailing expectations regarding the arrival of God’s kingdom. Rather than appearing as a conquering Messiah in the mold of Israel’s celebrated heroes—one who would liberate the nation from foreign oppression and execute judgment upon its enemies—the cross appeared to signify fraud, cowardice, weakness, and defeat.	Deuteronomy 21:23; Psalm 22:6-8; Isaiah 53:3-7; Zechariah 12:10; Daniel 9:26; Matthew 27:42; Luke 23:2, 37, 24:21; John 12:23, 32; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Philippians 2:8-9; Hebrews 2:14-15, 12:2; Revelation 5:5-9
Resurrection: As the “true Israel,” Jesus’ resurrection revealed that He had faithfully accomplished and embodied everything Israel was called to be yet failed to fulfill. His resurrection publicly demonstrated the veracity of His kingdom claims: the curse had been reversed, sin, death, and Satan had been defeated, true exile had been brought to an end, and a new, better exodus had been inaugurated. Moreover, the resurrection represented the Father’s ultimate personal vindication of Jesus as the faithful Son of God, ushering in a new humanity and a restored, reconstituted Israel—the firstfruits of a new creation and the dawn of a new creational reality.	Genesis 3:15; Exodus 4:22-23; Deuteronomy 30:3-6; Isaiah 49:3-5, 52-53; Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 12:32, 20:1-18; Acts 2:24-36; Romans 1:4, 16:20; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26; Colossians 1:13, 18, 2:13-16
Ascension & Reign: The gospel climaxes not merely in resurrection but in enthronement. Jesus presently reigns as the exalted Messiah. Yet, as the new creation He inaugurated overlaps with the present evil age, an active and palpable tension persists between these two realms until the former is fully realized and consummated at His second coming—the dynamic commonly referred to as the “already, but not yet” kingdom. This tension helps explain why alienation, estrangement, brokenness, and suffering still remain, even as restoration, renewal, and reconciliation have already begun in earnest and are progressively unfolding toward their ultimate fulfillment.	Psalm 2:6, 110:1-2; Daniel 7:13–14; Acts 2:33-36; Romans 8:18-25; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; 2 Corinthians 4:16-17; Hebrews 2:8-9; Revelation 21:1-5
Pentecost and Ongoing Church Expansion: The church—an organism rather than a merely human institution—is indwelt and empowered by the Spirit and thus participates in the true humanity of Jesus. As a new covenant community, it shares in the privilege and responsibility as co-heirs and adopted sons and daughters, bearing witness to the certainty of the inaugurated kingdom and continuing the failed mission first entrusted to Adam and Eve in the garden but now fulfilled in Christ, as true Israel and the last Adam, and extended through His body.	Genesis 1:26-28, 3:15; Exodus 19:5-6; Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Matthew 5:13-14; John 20:21-22; Acts 2:4; Romans 8:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:9-10

God's Endgame - Cosmic Redemption, Restoration, and Renewal

A proper understanding of the gospel must begin, not with individual persons and their salvation, but with the unfolding story of Israel and the climactic fulfillment of God's covenant purposes in Jesus Christ. One of the central claims of the New Testament is that Jesus does not appear as a religious innovator detached from Israel's history, but as its faithful culmination and point of fulfillment. In this sense, the Gospels consistently present Jesus as the true and faithful Israelite—one who recapitulates Israel's story and succeeds where Israel failed, thereby transforming and "Christifying" Israel's narrative in the process. His baptism and wilderness testing are not random, incidental episodes, but revelatory, programmatic moments: at His baptism, He is declared the beloved Son (cf. Exodus 4:22; Isaiah 1:1-3), and in the wilderness He remains obedient where Israel had previously rebelled. Jesus thus embodies Israel's vocation as God's covenant son, reliving their history in perfect faithfulness and bringing it to its intended fulfillment.

From this vantage point, Jesus' ministry cannot be reduced to isolated acts of moral instruction or the process and mechanics of personal salvation. Rather, His works—healings, exorcisms, table fellowship, forgiveness of sins, and restorative miracles—function as visible signs that the kingdom of God has broken into history. These are not merely private blessings for individual recipients, but public demonstrations that God's reign is being reasserted over a fractured, estranged creation. The kingdom, then, becomes the interpretive center of Jesus' life and mission. When Jesus proclaims, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand," He is not offering a new technique and prescription for personal spiritual escape from condemnation and God's wrath, but announcing the long-awaited fulfillment of Israel's prophetic hope: God is becoming King through His Messiah, restoring His people and renewing His creation.

This broader narrative, deeply rooted in a firm understanding of the Old Testament, stands in tension with a common reduction within much of Western Christianity, where the gospel is often distilled into an individualized salvation formula: humanity is sinful, destined for judgment, and offered personal forgiveness through belief in Jesus' death and resurrection. While these elements are not fundamentally untrue, they become distorted when detached from the larger biblical storyline. Evangelistic summaries such as the "Romans Road" or "Four Spiritual Laws" frequently present salvation as a sterile transaction concerned primarily with postmortem destiny rather than participation in the inaugurated reign of God. The result is an impoverished and incomplete gospel that shifts from a cosmic, covenantal announcement to a privatized spiritual remedy.

By contrast, biblically grounded proclamation frames the gospel as the announcement that God's promised kingdom has arrived in and through Jesus the Messiah. This is why the apostolic witness repeatedly emphasizes fulfillment: "The time is fulfilled," and "The kingdom of God is at hand." The gospel is first and foremost good news about what God has done in history—His decisive action to enthroned His Son, liberate His people, reconcile His creation to Himself, and begin the renewal of all things. Personal salvation, while profoundly real and essential, is therefore not the gospel itself, but a vitally important implication/fruit of it. Forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, healing, liberation, covenant renewal, and the indwelling presence of God are all dimensions of this larger reality, but they flow from the prior reality of God's kingdom breaking into the world.

Seen this way, Jesus is not merely the answer to an abstract sin problem; He is the faithful Son who reconstitutes Israel and fulfills their vocation on behalf of the world. In Him, God's purposes are "yes" and "Amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20), boldly demonstrated through creation's reconciliation and renewal: the broken covenant is renewed, the exiled people are regathered, and God once again dwells among His people through the presence of His Spirit. Salvation, therefore, is not an escape from this world, but the beginning of creation's glorious restoration as it "puts on" shalom—the integrity, wholeness, order, perfection, blessedness, and harmony that God always intended.

Recovering and uplifting the gospel of the kingdom reshapes both theology and practice. It restores the Bible's grand narrative, recenters Jesus not only as Savior but also as the reigning King, and reconnects personal faith to transformation (creational renewal), discipleship, mutual edification, and other tangible expressions of God's renewing work in creation. It also expands the church's mission beyond individual decision-making to active participation in Jesus' life, reign, and sonship and, by extension, in the restoration of all things. Christian life becomes, in this paradigm, not merely about securing a future destiny but about living as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the coming cosmic renewal.

Ultimately, the gospel is not merely the message that individuals may be rescued from judgment and the wrath to come, but the royal announcement that through Jesus Christ, God has become King over all the world, His covenant purposes have reached their fulfillment, and His reign is being established over a renewed creation.

The Good News - Going Deeper

While this resource seeks to provide a compelling counternarrative to common portrayals of the gospel, whether shaped by misunderstanding or competing theological presuppositions, reading it—and even agreeing with its central claims—should not be viewed as the culmination of the journey, but rather its beginning. The Road From Emmaus team encourages you to continue deepening and broadening your understanding of these themes by exploring the additional resources listed below.

Sermons and Notes

[*Excursus on the Gospel—Becoming All Things to All Men*](#)

[*Excursus on the Gospel—Being Ambassadors of Reconciliation*](#)

[*Excursus on the Gospel—Living into the Gospel*](#)

[*Excursus—The Gospel of Resurrection, Part One*](#)

[*Excursus—The Gospel of Resurrection, Part Two*](#)

[*Epilogue: Proclaiming the Gospel of Resurrection, Part One*](#)

[*Epilogue: Proclaiming the Gospel of Resurrection, Part Two*](#)

[*Excursus: The Gospel According to Zechariah*](#)

Books

God's Big Picture - Vaughan Roberts

Coming of the Kingdom - Herman Ridderbos

Gospel and Kingdom - Graeme Goldsworthy