

Living Way Church  
Biblical Studies Program – April 2013  
God’s Unfolding Revelation: An Introduction to Biblical Theology  
Lesson Two

- I. Overview of the Introduction to *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible*
  - A. The Bible is a diverse collection of writings
    1. Sixty-six books written by about forty human authors over a period of 1600 years
    2. Two main sections (the Old and New Testaments) written in two major languages (Hebrew and Greek), which includes many types of literary genres
      - a. The arrangement of the thirty-nine books of the English Old Testament
        - (1) Law – Genesis through Deuteronomy
        - (2) Narrative history – Joshua through Esther
        - (3) Poetry and Wisdom Literature – Job through Song of Solomon
        - (4) Prophecy – Isaiah through Malachi (includes apocalyptic [Daniel])
      - b. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books
        - (1) Gospels
        - (2) History (Acts)
        - (3) Epistles
        - (4) Apocalyptic (Revelation)
    3. Although the Bible contains a great variety of material, written by many human authors, over a long period of time, it holds together as a unity
    4. Fundamentally, it is just one book written by one author with one main subject
      - a. The Bible is God’s inspired Word
      - b. The one supreme subject that binds the Scripture together is Jesus Christ and the salvation God offers through him
    5. The Bible is not a collection of books
      - a. Some people read the Bible as if reading a collection of independent books – that each can be read without reference to the others
      - b. The Bible is to be read as one book that presents the unfolding story of God’s plan to save the world through His Son Jesus Christ
  - B. If we want to understand any part of the Bible properly, we must consider where it fits in that great plan and how it contributes to it

1. By understanding the main storyline of the Bible, you are enabled to get your “bearings” in any part of it
2. With the Bible story in your mind, whichever part of the Bible you are reading, you should know where you have come from and where you are going
3. Knowing the main storyline of the Bible helps you to discover how each part points to Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished

## II. The Kingdom of God

### A. The kingdom of God is the binding theme of the whole Bible

1. Although the expression “kingdom of God” does not appear in the Old Testament, the concept certainly does
2. Vaughan Roberts defines the kingdom of God as “God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing”
3. God desires for human beings to enjoy an intimate relationship with Him in His presence
  - a. As He is a perfect, holy God, that is possible only as we submit to His loving rule and do not sin
  - b. That is life at its best; life as it was designed to be lived
4. To live under God’s rule means to enjoy God’s blessing – that is what we see at the creation in the garden of Eden (until the fall)
5. Genesis three records that human beings disobeyed God and lost His blessing
  - a. The consequences are devastating, not just for humanity, but for the whole creation (Rom 8:19-22)
  - b. In his great love, God promises to put things right again and reestablish his kingdom on earth
6. The rest of the Bible tells the story of the fulfillment of that promise: partially in Israel’s history in the Old Testament, and then perfectly through Jesus Christ

### B. The Bible is about God’s plan of salvation: His promise to restore His kingdom, and then the fulfillment of that promise through His Son Jesus

## III. A Bible Overview

### A. The Old Testament

1. The pattern of the kingdom
  - a. In the garden of Eden, we see the world as God designed it to be – God’s people, Adam and Eve, live in God’s place, the garden, under His rule as they submit to His Word
  - b. To be under God’s rule in the Bible is always to enjoy His blessing: it is the best way to live
  - c. God’s original creation shows as a model of His kingdom as it was meant to be
2. The perished kingdom

- a. Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandment and choose to live independently of God
  - b. They hide from God and they are banished from the garden
  - c. They are no longer under God's rule, so they do not enjoy His blessing; instead, they are under His judgment
  - d. But God, in His great love, is determined to restore His kingdom
3. The promised kingdom
- a. God calls Abraham and makes some unconditional promises to him: through Abraham's descendants, God will reestablish His kingdom
  - b. They will be His people, living in His land and enjoying His blessing, and through them all peoples on earth will be blessed (Gen 12:1-3)
4. The partial kingdom
- a. The Bible records how God's promises to Abraham are partially fulfilled in the history of the nation of Israel
  - b. Through the exodus from Egypt, God makes Abraham's descendants His very own people
    - (1) At Mount Sinai, He gives them His law so that they might live under His rule and enjoy His blessing, as Adam and Eve had done before they sinned
    - (2) The blessing is marked chiefly by God's presence with His people in the tabernacle
  - c. Under Joshua, the people enter the land and, by the time of Kings David and Solomon, they enjoy peace and prosperity in the land promised
    - (1) That was the high point of the history of Israel
    - (2) They were God's people in God's place, the land of Canaan, under God's rule and therefore enjoying his blessing
  - d. Yet, the promises to Abraham had still not been completely fulfilled
    - (1) The problem was sin – the continual disobedience of the people of Israel
    - (2) That was soon to lead to the dismantling of the partial kingdom as the nation of Israel fell apart
5. The prophesied kingdom
- a. After the death of King Solomon, civil war broke out and the kingdom of Israel split into two parts: Israel in the north and Judah in the south
    - (1) After two hundred years of separate existence, the

northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians (722 B.C.)

- (2) The southern kingdom of Judah struggled on for another century, but then it too was conquered and its inhabitants were taken into exile to Babylon (586 B.C.)
  - b. During this period in their history, God spoke to the people of Israel and Judah through the prophets - He explained that they were being punished for their sin but still offered hope for the future
  - c. The prophets pointed forward to a time when God would act decisively through His King, the Messiah, to fulfill all His promises
  - d. Although the people of Israel were allowed to return to the land following seventy years of exile in Babylon, God made it clear that the great time of salvation was still in the future
  - e. The Old Testament ends (with the words of the prophet Malachi [420 B.C.]), waiting for God's Messiah to appear and introduce His kingdom
- B. The New Testament
1. The present kingdom
    - a. Four hundred years pass (following the end of the Old Testament) before Jesus begins His public ministry with the words, "...the time has come; the kingdom of God is near" (Mk 1:15)
    - b. The waiting was over - God's King had come to establish God's kingdom
    - c. His life, teaching, and miracles all proved that Jesus was who He said He was: God Himself in human form
    - d. He had the power to put everything right again
    - e. It was through His death the Jesus dealt with the problem of sin and made it possible for human beings to come back into relationship with God
    - f. Through His resurrection from the dead, Jesus demonstrated the success of His mission
  2. The proclaimed kingdom
    - a. By His death and resurrection, Jesus did all that was necessary to put everything right again and completely restore God's kingdom
    - b. He ascended into heaven and He commissions His people to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, so that all nations can put their trust in Him and be ready for Him when He returns

- c. We live during this period, which the Bible calls “the last days” – it began on the day of Pentecost when God sent the Spirit to equip His church to tell the whole world about Jesus Christ
3. The perfected kingdom
- a. One day Jesus Christ will return
  - b. There will be a great division
    - (1) His enemies will be separated from His presence in hell
    - (2) His people will join Him in a perfect new creation
  - c. Then, the Gospel promises will be completely fulfilled
  - d. The book of Revelation describes a fully restored kingdom: God’s people, Christians from all nations, in God’s place, the new heavens and the newer, under God’s rule and enjoying His blessing