

GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM (THE KINGDOM OF GOD)

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The purpose of this study is to clarify what the kingdom of God is based on. People have claimed that the kingdom of God is the church (which one?), or that the kingdom of God is in your heart. These ideas will seem absurd when one understands what the concept of the kingdom of God is actually based on. Pay special attention to keywords such as "*promise*" and "*inheritance*." The concept starts with the promises that God made to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3, Genesis 13:14-15 & Genesis 17:7-8**. These promises are also made to Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and Jacob (Genesis 28:14) who are Abraham's son and grandson. The three are also referred to as *the patriarchs*.

Genesis 12:3: *"All the communities of the earth will find **blessing in you.**"*

This is a reference to the Messiah (Jesus). God promised Abraham that through his descendants would come someone through whom the world would be blessed (saved). Paul confirms this in **Acts 3:25-26:**

*"You are the children of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors when **He said to Abraham, 'In your offspring all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'** For you first, **God raised up His servant and sent him to bless you.**"*

The second promise deals with the earth. The families that will be blessed are the families of the earth. And it is on this earth that the families will be blessed. God specifically promises Abraham the earth (or the land as it is sometimes referred to) as his inheritance.

Genesis 13:14-15: *"The LORD said to Abraham: Look about you, and from where you are, gaze to the north and south, east and west; **all the land that you see I will give to you and your descendants forever.**"*

Genesis 17:7-8: *"I will maintain my covenant with you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an **everlasting pact**, to be your God and the God of your*

*descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you **the land** in which you are now staying, the **whole land** of Canaan, as a permanent possession."*

The Messiah came to **confirm** and **proclaim** the **promises** made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the reason why Jesus came. Through his death our sins are forgiven (we are blessed), and through his reign as our king on earth (Jesus' Second Coming), Abraham and his descendants (the resurrected in Christ) will inherit the earth as their permanent possession.

Romans 15:8: *"For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, to **CONFIRM** the **promises to the patriarchs.**"*

What promise? That Abraham and his descendants would **inherit the world.**

Romans 4:13: *"It was not through the law that the **PROMISE** was made to Abraham and his descendants that he would **INHERIT THE WORLD**, but through the righteousness that comes through faith."*

What did Jesus come to proclaim? The kingdom of God.

Luke 4:43: *"To the other towns also I must **proclaim** the good news of the kingdom of God, because for **this purpose I have been sent.**"*

As you can see, Jesus came to confirm the promises that God made to Abraham and to proclaim the kingdom of God. Jesus is **proclaiming** what he came to **confirm.**

1 Corinthians 6:9: *"Do you not know that the unjust will not **inherit** the kingdom of God."*

Abraham was **promised** that he would **inherit the world.** In the verse above it says that the unjust will not **inherit the kingdom of God.** The keyword is "*inherit.*" To **inherit** the kingdom of God is to **inherit** the world. The kingdom of God is the world under the rule of God through His Messiah.

The kingdom of God = The promises that God made to the patriarchs.

Entrance into the kingdom of God is the Christian goal. This is the reward that God has promised the followers of Christ. **Galatians 3:29:**

*"And if you **belong to Christ**, then you are **Abraham's descendant, heirs according to the promise.**"*

What promise? That he would **inherit the world.**

Romans 4:13: *"It was not through the law that the **PROMISE** was made to Abraham and his descendants that he would **INHERIT THE WORLD**, but through the righteousness that comes."*

We are supposed to inherit the world along with Abraham. Because of our faith in Christ we are considered descendants of Abraham and heirs to the same promise. With Christ as our king we will reign on earth. **Revelation 20:4:**

*"They came to life and **reigned** with Christ a thousand years."*

Where will we reign with Christ? **Revelation 5:10:**

*"You made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will **REIGN on EARTH.**"*

The kingdom of God is the theme of the entire Bible. It started with the promises that God made to Abraham. Every prophet has had something to say on this topic. God through the prophets added more details until Jesus arrived to **confirm** and **proclaim** the kingdom of God, not only to the Jews, but also to the world (*blessing*, Genesis 12:3).

Abraham and his descendants have never possessed the world. They all died in faith (Hebrews 11:13), this is why there will be a resurrection, so that God's promises will be fulfilled. When will the resurrection happen? In the last day of this age, in the coming of the new age (inaugurated by Jesus' return). This is when Abraham and his descendants will inherit the world.

Luke 20:35: *"But those who are deemed worthy to **attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead.**"*

John 11:23-24: *"Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise.' Martha said to him, I know he will rise, in the **resurrection on the last day.**"*

Summary - The story of man started on the earth with Adam and Eve. They corrupted it by their disobedience to God. The message of the kingdom of God starts in Genesis and ends in Revelation. It is God's plan of salvation for the human race by returning man and the earth to its original condition. It is best summarized by the New American Bible pg. 15 & 24:

"The plan of salvation foretold by the sacred authors, recounted and explained by them, is found as the **true word of God** in the books of the Old Testament. The principle purpose to which the plan of the old covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming of Christ, the redeemer of all and of the **messianic kingdom**, to announce this coming by prophecy.

Another important topic in prophetic preaching is *messianism*. God punishes infidelity to His covenant (partnership). Israel is humiliated for its sins. But at some **future date** God's **kingdom on earth** will be restored. **God's vicegerent, His Messiah**, anointed to royal dignity, will **reign in that kingdom**. You should pay attention to this messianic expectation in Hebrew literature. This is necessary to understand the literature of the New Testament, which sees the **fulfillment of this messianic expectation in Jesus of Nazareth**. In other words, the New Testament movement is the fulfillment of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus of Nazareth proclaims that he is the **promised Messiah (anointed) king to come, to establish the kingdom (reign) of God**, for which the Old Testament was yearning."

So why do people think that our reward is heaven? This idea came about through the influence of Greek philosophy upon the early church of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries. There is a paper listed at the end that deals specifically with death.

Once you understand what the kingdom of God is based on (the promises made to the patriarchs), then you will easily see the error in believing that the kingdom of God is the church, or that it is in your heart. This paper is just a springboard. There are many more verses to study and much more to learn about Jesus' most important teaching.

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