

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Inextricably bound to the good news of the resurrection and the restoration of all things, is the good news of “the kingdom of God.”

14 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.” (ESVMk. 1:14-15)

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. (ESVAc. 28:30-31)

- B. Unfortunately, there is a lot of sloppy teaching on the subject of the kingdom of God in the Body of Christ today. This is due to a number of factors, including: confusion and distortion created by Platonic thought; unfamiliarity with the Old Testament; proof-texting and interpreting Bible verses out of their immediate context and the broader context of Scripture; and the prideful tendency of the human heart to build thought systems that rationalize and validate some form of a Messianic complex.
- C. In the New Testament we never find an explicit definition of the “kingdom of God.” Why is this? The answer is that Jesus, the apostles, and all of their Jewish listeners already had a solid grasp what this term meant due to their knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament. The New Testament, in other words, presupposes and assumes the same gospel as that of the Old Testament.
- D. A close reading of Scripture shows that there are at least four distinct yet interrelated senses in which the “kingdom of God” needs to be understood. There are texts that pertain to what I will call: a) the Kingdom of Creation; b) the Kingdom of Eden; c) the Kingdom of Israel; and d) the Kingdom of the Messiah, or the Messianic Kingdom. Again, these four are all dynamically interrelated, but failure to recognize their distinct nuances as portrayed in Scripture can lead to great confusion concerning the nature of the gospel and Christian discipleship in this age.
- E. In what follows, we will apply the following nine questions to texts that are *representative* of a group of texts that relate to the four different senses of the kingdom described above (obviously an exhaustive study is beyond the scope of a short seminar!): 1) Where is the kingdom? 2) Where is the kingdom headquartered? 3) Who establishes the kingdom? 4) When is the kingdom established? 5) By what means is the kingdom established? 6) Who governs the kingdom? 7) Who are the citizens of the kingdom? 8) On what basis are the citizens included in the kingdom? 9) How is the kingdom administered? We will use the picture painted by the answers to these nine questions to form our answer to question 10: What is “the kingdom”?

II. THE KINGDOM OF CREATION

- A. Where is the kingdom?

10 David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, “Praise be to you, O LORD, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. 11 Yours, O LORD,

is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. ¹² **Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things.** **In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.** ¹³ **Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.** (NIV1 Chr. 29:10-13)

B. Where is the kingdom headquartered?

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (ESVPs. 103:19)

⁴ **The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.** ⁵ **Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,** ⁶ **who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?** (NIVPs. 113:4-6)

To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! (ESVPs. 123:1)

C. Who establishes the kingdom?

The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. (NIVPs. 89:11)

D. When is the kingdom established?

You, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. (NIVLa. 5:19)

¹ **The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.** ² **Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.** (NIVPs. 93:1-2)

E. By what means is the kingdom established?

But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. (NIVJer. 10:12)

F. Who governs the kingdom?

¹ **This is what the LORD says: “Heaven (Heb. shamayiim – YLT – “the heavens”) is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD.** (NIVIs. 66:1-2)

G. To whom does the kingdom belong?

Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me. (NIVJob 41:11)

To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. (NIVDeut. 10:14)

If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. (NIVPs. 50:12)

H. Who are the citizens of the kingdom?

¹ Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above. ² Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. ³ Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. ⁶ He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away. ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, ⁸ lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, ⁹ you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, ¹⁰ wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, ¹¹ kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, ¹² young men and maidens, old men and children. ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens. ¹⁴ He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the LORD. (NIVPs. 148:1-14)

I. On what basis are the citizens included in the kingdom?

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” (NIVRev. 4:11)

J. How is the kingdom administrated?

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. (ESVCol 1:16)

¹⁹ The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. ²⁰ Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! ²¹ Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! ²² Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! (ESVPs. 103:19-22)

¹⁹ Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰ And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’ “One suggested this, and another that. ²¹ Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ²² “‘By what means?’ the LORD asked. “‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. “‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’ ²³ “So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.” (NIV1 Kings 22:19-23)

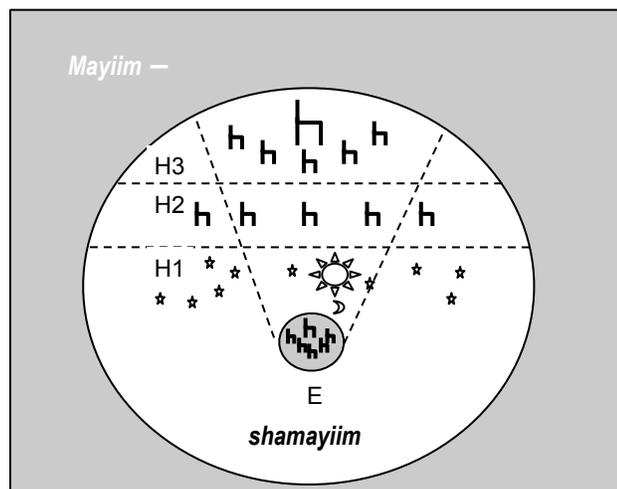
¹⁶ The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man. (ESVPs. 115:16)

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under

his feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (ESV Ps. 8:4-9)

- K. What is the “Kingdom of Creation”? *The kingdom of creation is a universal government encompassing all creation (everything in the heavens and the earth); was established in the beginning at creation; was founded by God, through the power of God and the wisdom of God; is headquartered from the highest heaven; was, is, and will always be governed and ruled by God; is made up of citizens whose inclusion is based simply on the fact of their being created; is administrated in partnership with angelic powers (of differing ranks, levels of authority, and assignment) and human beings.*

Diagram 1: The Kingdom of Creation



III. THE KINGDOM OF EDEN

- A. Where is the kingdom?

⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (ESV Ps. 8:4-9)

- B. Where is the kingdom headquartered?

⁸ Now the LORD God had planted a garden (Garden of Eden) in the east , in Eden (the region in which the Garden was planted); and there (in the Garden of Eden) he put the man he had formed. ⁹ And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ A river (downward movement from higher elevation) watering the garden flowed from Eden (Eden also a high place to the west of the Garden, a mountain); from there it was separated into four headwaters. (NIV Gen. 2:8-10)

¹¹ **Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me:** ¹² **“Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre (anti-Christ – king over Tyre and ten other nations in the last days – possessed by Satan and under Satan’s control, cf. Is. 13-22, Ezek. 25-30, Dan. 7, Rev. 12-13; to speak to one is to speak to the other), and say to him, Thus says the Lord God: “You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. ¹⁴ You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. ¹⁵ You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. ¹⁶ In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you (ESV alternative “banished you”), O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. ¹⁷ Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. ¹⁸ By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. ¹⁹ All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever”**(cf. Rev. 19-20). (ESV Ezek. 28:11-19)

- C. Who establishes the kingdom? – God
- D. When is the kingdom established? – the beginning
- E. By what means is the kingdom established? – God’s power and wisdom
- F. Who governs the kingdom?

¹ **Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested (Heb. *shabath* /*shaw·bath* - NIV note Or ceased) from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.** (NIV Gen. 2:1-3)

1. **8697** I. שָׁבַת (*šā·bāṭ*): v.; ≡ Str 7673; TWOT 2323—1. LN53.1-53.15 (qal) **observe the sabbath**, formally, rest, i.e., do the religious practice of ceasing from all activity or work on the seventh day of the week, as prescribed by God, as an extension of ceasing from an activity or state (Ex 23:12); **2.** LN 68.34-68.57 (qal) **stop**, cease, be still, be quiet, i.e., have an activity no longer continue (Ne 6:3); (hif) **put to an end**, stop (Ex 5:5); **3.** LN 13.69-13.103 (qal) **stop**, cease, i.e., have a state or condition come to an end d (Jos 5:12); (nif) **come to an end**, disappear (Isa 17:3; Eze 6:6; 30:18; 33:28+); (hif) **put a stop**, cause to cease, leave (Lev 2:13)
2. **8698** II. שָׁבַת (*šā·bāṭ*): v. [BDB]—see 8697 (qal) (Lev 23:32; 25:2; 2Ch 36:21+)
3. **8699** I. שֵׁבֶט (*šē·bēṭ*): n. fem. [oth qal ptcip.fem. of 3782]; ≡ Str 7675; TWOT 922a—1. LN 80.1-80.4 **site**, place, i.e., a location (Nu 21:15; 2Sa 23:7+); **2.** LN 85.67-85.85 **residence**,

i.e., a place where one lives (Ob 3+); **3.** LN 67.142-67.162 **reign**, formally, throne, i.e., an indefinite period of time as a figurative extension of a throne seat (Am 6:3+); **4.** LN 6.106-6.117 unit: מְּוֹמָהּ שִׁבְתָּ (mā-qôm hā- šē-bēṯ) 1 seat, throne, formally, place of sitting (1Ki 10:19; 2Ch 9:18+), see also 8700; **5.** LN 17.12-17.18 **sitting**, i.e., the act. of sitting quietly (Jer 9:5; Pr 20:3; Ru 2:7), note: oth parse as 3782 or 8700¹

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (^{ESV}Ps. 103:19)

The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man. (^{ESV}Ps. 115:16)

- G. Who are the citizens of the kingdom? – All *living* creatures (cf. Ps. 8)
- H. On what basis are the citizens included in the kingdom? – creation, with stipulation of obedience

⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” (^{NIV}Gen. 2:16-17)

²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (^{NIV}Gen. 3:23-24)

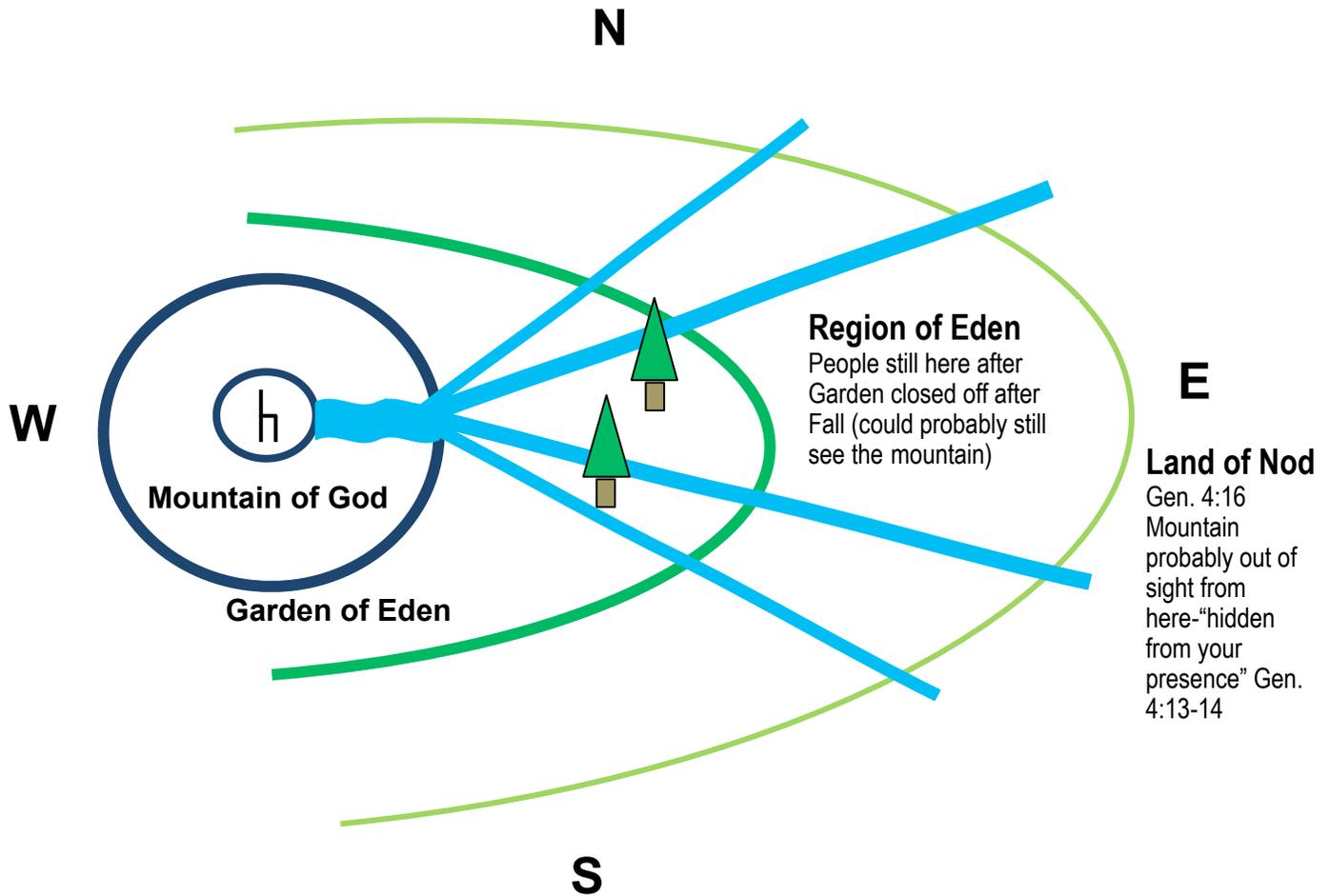
- I. How is the kingdom administrated?

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. (^{NIV}Gen. 1:19-20)

- J. What is “the kingdom of Eden”? *The “kingdom of Eden” was a government whose domain was the earth; was established in the beginning when God created the earth; was founded by God, through the power of God and the wisdom of God; was headquartered from the mountain of Eden, in the Garden of Eden, in the region of Eden; was governed and ruled by God ultimately, with human beings in a position of delegated authority; was made up of citizens created by God and put in the Garden by God, with a stipulation of obedience for continued inclusion; was administrated in loving partnership with human beings. Before the Fall, the earth existed in a state of perfection under the dominion of the “kingdom of Eden.”*

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.) (DBLH 8697-8699, #5). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Diagram 2: Kingdom of Eden



TEMPLE LAYOUT

