

Introduction to God's Big Picture

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[0:00] Why is it helpful to have a picture on the box when you're putting the puzzle together?! Well, it shows you where the basic color schemes are and where the pieces of the puzzle fit.

They at least fit into the framework of this picture that is before you. And so it helps you identify and be a hint to where each piece then fits into that big picture.

This is the name of our new series of studies in this class. It's a book called God's Big Picture by Vaughn Roberts, a present-day minister in England.

And he acknowledges that this book is largely a rework of another book by Graham Goldsworthy called The Gospel and the Kingdom, Gospel and Kingdom.

Now, Roberts lets us know right away of his aim in this study. It's to set the big picture of the Bible before you so that you can see how each individual part of the Bible fits into the big picture, the big story.

[1:12] Too many Christians have the equivalent of a whole bunch of puzzle pieces lying on the table as they read their Bibles. It's just a bunch of individual pieces.

They're all there, but they're not put together in any kind of organized form. And we, too, can know all the Bible stories and yet fail to see how they are related to one another and how they fit into the overall storyline of history so that we see and understand how Ruth is related to the Gospel of Matthew and how Genesis is related to the Gospel of Matthew and how Genesis is related to the Gospel of Matthew and how the prophet Isaiah is related to the Apostle Paul and his writings. And we see this oneness of Scripture. That's the aim, seeing the interconnectedness of the Bible in its central theme. And that's a lifelong process.

I would dare to say that none of us have arrived at that. It's seeing the connections between the different parts of the Bible and how they fit into the big picture.

Well, this is a study that I trust will prove helpful to us. His introduction shows us the importance, then, of getting the big picture clear in our study of the Bible.

[2:38] He speaks about the growing ignorance of the Bible in our culture. Now, he's a Brit. And for the longest time, Sam's with us, so I've got to be careful what I say about the Brits.

Is it not true that the primary public schools actually had Bible courses? He's nodding. Okay. Bible class, even as a part of the regular curriculum, these classes could be taught by local ministers or even lay people who would go into the public school and teach the Scriptures.

Such was the case in the example that Vaughn Roberts cites. He says, Well, there was a long silence as the children shuffled nervously on their seats.

And eventually, a little lad put up his hand and said, Please, sir, my name is Bruce Jones. I don't know who did it, but it wasn't me. It's a police inspector teaching that day.

Who knocked down the walls of Jericho? It wasn't me. Well, the policeman thought that the reply was a bit cheeky. So he reported the incident to the headmaster.

[4:07] And after a pause, the headmaster replied, Well, I know Bruce Jones. He's an honest chap. And if he said he didn't do it, then he didn't. Now, Roberts calls this a silly story, and it's probably not true, but it makes a point that a few decades ago, nearly everybody knew who knocked down the walls of Jericho.

But in our day and age, we are biblical illiterates. What do you mean the walls of Jericho? What do you mean they were knocked down? People don't know the basic facts of the Bible, let alone how they fit together into a unified whole.

And that can be the case as well, then, with professing Christians, especially as they've been raised in a culture where they haven't received the basic teachings of Scripture.

They can hear these things then in Sunday school and so on and have the knowledge of the pieces without understanding the whole. So that's our aim. How does it fit into the big story of God's salvation in Jesus Christ?

Now, there are certain things that make it challenging to see God's big picture as we read the Bible. How many books are there in the Bible? Sixty-six individual books.

[5 : 34] About 40 human authors wrote the Bible. And they lived over a period of about 2,000 years from one another. Great differences in culture and in place.

They wrote about events from creation and even before creation and eternity past to the eternal age after Christ's return.

They spoke about a vast difference of time on the timeline of history. And they wrote mainly in two different languages, the Hebrew and the Old Testament, and Greek and the New.

There are different kinds of literature in the Bible. There's history and poetry and prophecy. And all these things present certain challenges to us to detect.

What is the big story here in all these particulars? And we could easily miss the forest for the trees, seeing each 66 trees and miss.

[6 : 38] Well, how do they look together in the forest? And yet, though there are all these factors to deal with, most fundamentally, the Bible is just one book.

Indeed, it's been printed in one cover, isn't it? It's all there, and rightly so. It belongs together. So it's really just one book written by one author and with one main subject.

Can you give me a verse in the Bible that tells us who the author of Scripture is? Okay, give us the verse. Okay, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

Or is God-breathed? It's 2 Timothy 3.16. There you have it. All Scripture. So everything between the covers of our Bible. All of it has been breathed out by God.

Another verse, 2 Peter 1.21. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

[7 : 50] Just like a sailboat is carried along by the wind. So the writers of this book were all carried along by the one author, God, the Spirit. So there's one author.

And it's this fact that the Bible has one overarching author that accounts for the unity that we find in the Bible. We don't find 66 different themes going different directions.

But we find that all these authors, human authors, writing over all this 2,000 years to different people, they're all working on the same message.

That makes sense if there is indeed just one book written by one author. And there's one supreme subject that binds all the parts together.

It's the Lord Jesus and his salvation of sinners and the glory of God revealed in that salvation. So Jesus says in John 5.39, These are the scriptures that testify about me.

[8 : 56] Now he had the Old Testament scriptures. And he's saying that they testify about me. Well, we know that the New Testament testifies about him too, doesn't it?

From the very beginning to the end of the New Testament. So there's one supreme subject. It is Christ. And that's what he taught his disciples on the day of his resurrection. As he opened the scriptures to their understanding and explained in them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

So Jesus Christ and the salvation that is in him is the key to unlocking the scriptures. It's the one supreme subject. So the Bible has one author, one supreme subject, and it is one book.

So though there are 66 books in it, it's still one. It belongs together. They're not independent books that could properly be understood on their own without any reference to the other 65 books.

And you see that, how they build upon one another and tell one long single story of God's plan to save the world through his son, Jesus Christ. So it's not just the binding that holds these 66 books together.

[10 : 12] It's their organic unity, their commonality, their development of the one main theme.

Another way to come at this idea of the scriptures all referring to telling one story is to talk about context.

We're all aware of the importance of reading any verse that we read in scripture in context. You've heard of the guy that just used the opening Bible idea to read the scriptures.

And Judas went out and hung himself. Go thou and do likewise. What's wrong with that version of studying the Bible?

Well, you're not studying the verses in their context. And so it is with this idea of context. If we would understand the meaning of any verse, we must see it in its relationship to the verses going ahead of it and coming after it.

And the same is true on a larger scale. We must not only see how one verse is related to the verses around it.

[11:32] That's the immediate context. But we must also see how it fits into the whole purpose of the book. So you're reading the book of Hebrews and you come to Hebrews 7.25 that talks about God is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him because he ever lives to make intercession for them.

Well, you need to see who's he talking about and what's right around it. Well, he's talking about the high priest Jesus. And he's always living in heaven. And he's able to save his people because he didn't die and then need to be replaced by another high priest.

But he rose again and he always lives. Oh, it's talking about Christ as our high priest. But we also need to see how does that fit not only into its immediate context but into the context of the book of Hebrews.

What's the meaning of the whole book of Hebrews? Then we place it into that context that the new covenant is a better covenant than the old covenant. That the mediator of the new covenant is better than the mediator of the old covenant.

That the blessings of the new covenant are better than the old covenant. And so on and so forth.

Then we begin to appreciate the meaning of one verse as we look at its surrounding context.

[12:45] But the bigger context of the book of Hebrews. And then we've got to go one step further and ask, What is its relationship to the whole story? And that's, again, the main intent of this study.

To get the biggest context of all on each verse of scripture. To understand how it fits into the one story.

So if we're back to the puzzle illustration. You've got one red puzzle piece. How does it fit into this puzzle?

Well, you're looking at the picture there and you see, Oh, there's a sunset. And there's a whole band of red over here.

So you know that this red piece fits together with all the other red pieces. So you gather all the red pieces around. And you start to try to figure out how this red piece fits in with the other red pieces.

[13:50] And then you look at the big picture again. And you see, Oh, that's right under the yellow. And above the purple in this sunset. And so you've got a bigger picture.

And you begin to put it together then in relationship to what's around it. And then you look at the whole big picture. And it helps you to see how that one little red piece fits into the big puzzle.

Well, that's what we're aiming to do in this study. And I think one of the most helpful things that I have done in my own Bible study and Bible reading to see the organic unity of the Bible and how it all fits together is simply to read the Bible at different places at the same time.

And I'm constantly being struck by the common themes that run right through Scripture. As I'm reading in the first part of the Bible, the Pentateuch.

And I just have a bookmark at Genesis 1.1. And as I read, I'll read something in Genesis perhaps.

And then I'll move ahead to the history of Joshua right on through the kings.

[14:59] And then the prophets. And I've got a bookmark in each place. Then the Gospels, the four Gospels. And then the rest of the New Testament. And I may rarely get to all five in the same day.

But whatever I read, I'm just advancing my bookmarks. And as I do that, I'm reading at different places in the Bible together. Oh, my goodness.

I read one time last week in Genesis 17 of God's covenant with Abraham of circumcision. And then I was reading in Joshua that after they crossed the Jordan River to go in and take the land, God says, now you need to circumcise all those children that were not circumcised in the desert.

And then I'm reading in Jeremiah. And he's charging the people of Israel, you're not circumcised in heart. You're just like the Philistines. And in three readings, I saw this whole theme of circumcision.

And as we see that, we begin to appreciate that there's one message. And you can go right on into the New Testament. My reading didn't take me to Colossians 2 and other texts that would have followed that very theme right on through the Bible.

[16:10] But by reading at different places, it's helpful to see that the Bible indeed is really one book. You wouldn't understand what Joshua was doing if you didn't understand that God instituted circumcision with Abraham.

And you wouldn't understand what is Jeremiah's problem with these people if you didn't understand what God had wanted from Abraham by his circumcision.

Well, the Bible is divided then into two large parts. Old Testament, New Testament. How are these two related to each other? Well, the Old Testament points forward to the one main event, the coming of Christ.

And the New Testament points back to it. One is promise. He's coming. He's coming. The whole Old Testament. He's coming. And the New Testament.

He has come. Fulfillment. So it's promise, fulfillment. If you just want to remember two words that sum up Old Testament, New Testament. Promise, fulfillment.

[17:13] Now, that's not to say that there wasn't fulfillment in the Old Testament. There's not promise in the New. But it helps you to understand the big picture. Promise and fulfillment. So we have the Old Testament.

Sad that many Christians rarely read the Old Testament. seem so far removed from our lives today. And so they just read the New Testament or a few favorite passages from Psalms.

If someone gave you a novel of Agatha Christie and you, it was a big fat one and you wanted to read it.

And you said, well, I don't know if I've got time for all of that. Would you just dip in halfway or two thirds through and start reading? You say, no, I wouldn't understand who the characters were. What the plot was.

And it's the same thing in the New Testament. If we neglect the Old Testament, we will not understand. What are these characters that are mentioned in the New Testament?

[18:18] What are these promises? That this happened to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah. And so, who's Isaiah? What did he promise? And so, we need both.

We need the Old Testament promises to help us understand the New Testament fulfillment. Because they are related organically.

We would miss so much. So much that would not make sense. And that's the way it is in the Bible. So, the Old Testament on its own is an unfinished story.

It's a promise without a fulfillment. And we must read on into the New Testament to see the full story. And so, with the New Testament, it's constantly looking back to the promise.

Now, think of the first verse of the New Testament. You could turn to it. It says, a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. If you had never read Genesis through Malachi, you wouldn't have a clue what he's saying.

[19:27] The son of Abraham, the son of David. Oh, but it's about Jesus. That's all I need. Just know what's the fulfillment in Jesus. Well, as soon as you turn to Jesus and the revelation about Jesus, Matthew 1.1 says, you've got to understand who Abraham is.

And that takes you all the way back to Genesis 11. And reading right on from there. So, again, we're seeing the unity that one is built upon the other.

Why is it important to understand who David and Abraham were? And what are their relationships to Jesus Christ? What covenant promise did God make to Abraham that is now fulfilled in Jesus? And so on with David. The New Testament demands on the very first verse a certain acquaintance that we have with the Old Testament. So our aim in this study, then, is to understand the main storyline, to become familiar with the big picture so that we will know how each piece of the puzzle fits with the big plan.

Now, when we look for a unifying theme in the Bible, we want to be careful. Because it needs to arise from the Bible itself and not something that we impose upon it from our own mind.

[20:43] So, if I'm trying to figure out how does all this tie together, we need to read and reread and reread the Bible so that it presents to us the unifying theme rather than, you know, I think this idea would be neat to unify the Scriptures.

It needs to come from the Scripture itself. And as we open the New Testament and start reading about the ministry of our Lord Jesus, what was the dominant theme of His preaching and teaching? This is a quiz. How well have you been listening for the last three months in the morning sermons? What was Jesus going around preaching?

The good news of the kingdom of God. That's right. And those belong together. That's how it's referred to. He went around healing and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. The time has come. The kingdom of God is at hand. That's what he preached. That's the summary statement. He's bringing the kingdom of God promised in the Old Testament.

[21:52] And then we have that famous Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 to 7, the manifesto of the kingdom of God. It's the gospel of the kingdom of God that he sends the twelve out to preach.

As you read, what did he tell the twelve to go out and to preach? Preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. And demonstrate its power by healing and casting out demons.

The very last verse of the book of Acts. As you come to the end, I should say, of the book of Acts. Just turn to Acts chapter 20.

Here we have the apostle Paul at the end of the story in Acts about Paul. Remember, he's gone to Rome to stand on trial before Caesar.

And we've got to see throughout the book of Acts how the gospel has spread out into all other areas beyond Judah, beyond Israel, out into the Gentiles as the apostle has been going about preaching.

[23:02] And in verse 23 of Acts 28, they arranged, these are the believers, or the people there in Rome, they arranged to meet Paul on a certain day and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying.

So he's under house arrest. People are coming to hear him. And from morning till evening, he explained and declared to them what? The kingdom of God. Now don't get scared by that and say, oh man, I don't understand what he's talking.

He's talking about the gospel. Of God establishing his reign in the hearts of men through Jesus Christ and his work. That's what he explained and declared to them and tried to convince them about Jesus from the law of Moses and from the prophets.

So again, the summary statement of the apostle Paul, the last here in Acts 28. Look down to verse 30. So for two whole years, Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

Boldly and without hindrance, he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. So for this reason, we are identifying the kingdom of God as the unifying theme of the Bible.

[24:17] Now this morning, we're going to have our last message on Christ the King. This is going to be sort of building upon what we have seen about Christ as King. And we're seeing that the kingdom of God is the unifying theme.

It was the unifying theme of Jesus' message. It was the message of his apostles, the apostle Paul in the New Testament. And they preached it as the fulfillment of what had been promised in the Old Testament.

So when we're looking for a unifying theme, the kingdom of God presents itself to us from the New Testament, opening from the study here of Jesus and the apostles.

Now the kingdom approach to the unity of Scripture is not the only way of looking at the interconnectedness and the one theme of Scripture. Some have said, no, the covenants.

That's a theme that you see running through the Scriptures, that God made a covenant with Adam, with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses and David and in Christ, the fulfillment of it.

[25:23] And so we see that there's this unifying theme of covenants running right through the Scriptures. That's another helpful approach to this unifying theme. But these two approaches are not contradictory.

Because God's covenant promises are kingdom promises. There's this great overlap. God does establish covenants and proceeds to build his case of bringing a new covenant in Jesus Christ through the establishing of covenants.

But they're kingdom promises and kingdom covenants. So they're not meant to be at odds with each other. So we're using the kingdom of God as the unifying theme to study the big picture.

Now a definition, a basic definition of the kingdom of God. And this was chiefly attributed to Graham Goldsworthy. And it's this. It's God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing.

I want you to say that with me three times aloud. God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing.

[26:33] God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing. Once more. God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing.

Now we want to memorize that. And we want to repeat it and drum it into our hearts and minds. And understand that's the big picture that we're looking for as we proceed through scripture.

There's three parts to the definition. First of all, God's people. Now God did not need human relationships. He did not feel lonely and have a need for relating with man.

That's not what happened. He had a perfect relationship within himself. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For all eternity he didn't need man. But he desired it.

And he planned it. And he brought it to pass. For human beings to enjoy an intimate relationship with him. A people of whom he could say, You will be my people.

[27 : 35] And I will be your God. That's what it means to be God's people. And by the way, that's the highest blessing of the covenant. You see how these two themes are joined together.

You will be my people. I will be your God. That's the establishing of a relationship. That's why there is such a thing today on the earth. And ever has been since Adam and Eve. As the people of God. It's because God has desired a relationship with men. God's people in God's place.

Okay, so there needs to be this enjoyment of God. In his presence. And since people are physical human beings who occupy place.

This requires a physical place. Where is God going to come and dwell with men? How is he going to make his presence known? I'm not saying God has a body.

[28 : 31] God the Father and Spirit don't have a body. God the Son has a body and will for all eternity. But we see this idea of God coming to dwell with men. God's people coming to dwell.

God himself coming to dwell with his people in God's place. And then thirdly, under God's rule and blessing. Because if man is to enjoy fellowship with his holy God.

He must do so under his rule. If we're to walk with him who has no light at all. Then we must walk in the light as he is in the light. We must come under his rule.

To have this blessing. We must live holy lives. To live with the Holy One. And when we live under God's rule. We will live under God's blessing.

That's the Bible's account of it. As Isaac Watts says. Where do blessings abound? Blessings abound where he reigns. So you want blessings?

[29 : 34] You get where he's reigning. And you put yourself under the reign of King Jesus. And you will have blessings without stop. Blessings abound where he reigns.

The prisoner leaps to lose his chains. The weary find eternal rest. And all the sons of want are blessed. To live under God's rule is to live under his blessing.

To live under his rule is to live the very best way that there is possible. Because his laws are holy, righteous, and good.

His law is called the perfect law of liberty. You can't improve on it. It gives freedom. His rule charts out the way that we were designed to live.

I am made to live this way. When I don't, I don't experience all the blessing that God means for me. He created me to live this way.

[30 : 30] And as I do, I live under his blessing. It's the good life. The abundant life. So this is the kingdom of God. Say it with me.

God's people in God's place living under God's rule and blessing. So establishing this kingdom of God on earth is what the Bible is all about.

It's what God is up to. It's his great plan that he's executing in perfect timing down through history. And Roberts divides this plan of God establishing his kingdom into eight great periods.

And in the time remaining, I'm going to run through and just introduce you to these eight stages of history that will help you see this big picture of God's people in God's place at God's time.

It's kind of a table of contents to our study on the kingdom of God. So the Old Testament has five parts. And the first is the pattern of the kingdom.

[31 : 37] At the beginning, God established his kingdom on earth. God's people were Adam and Eve. It was in God's place, the Garden of Eden. And they were living there under his rule and blessing.

Obedying God's word and enjoying his blessings. That's the model, the pattern of God's kingdom as we open the Bible. That's the way it was supposed to be. All right?

Part two. The perished kingdom. Through the work of Satan, Adam and Eve think life would be better if they lived it independently of God. If they went their own way instead of God's way.

And the results are disastrous. In rejecting God, they are no longer God's people. They're separated from him by sin. They're no longer in God's place because God drives them out of the garden.

And they're banished from the tree of life. They're no longer under God's rule. They're in rebellion. And therefore, they're not under his blessing. They now rather live under his curse and his judgment that now touches the very creation in which they live.

[32 : 44] And so, as our children's catechism says, instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable. That's the perished kingdom. Third phase, the promised kingdom.

We ask the children, did God leave all mankind to perish in a state of sin and misery? No. No. No. Rather, in grace, God is determined to restore his kingdom to earth.

And so, God calls Abraham in Genesis 12. And he promises through Abraham's descendants to reestablish his kingdom. He makes unconditional promises to Abraham.

Yes, he makes conditional promises as well. But he says, I am going to do this unconditionally. They will be his people. And they will live in his land.

And they will enjoy his blessing under his rule. And through them, all the peoples and nations of the world will be blessed. They, too, will live under his rule and, therefore, a blessing.

[33 : 44] And that's the promise of the gospel, according to Galatians 3.7, that was preached to Abraham. And under Joshua, I'm sorry, it was partially fulfilled in the history of Israel, but it's only finally fulfilled through Jesus Christ, who is, as Matthew 1.1 says, the son of Abraham.

His seed. And the last five periods of history, then, trace out the fulfillment of this promised kingdom as it is restored.

So, we've seen the pattern of the kingdom in Edom, the perished kingdom at the fall, and now the promised kingdom. And we could even go back, and we will as we come to these, see that the promise came in the garden itself in Genesis 3.15.

And then, number four, the partial kingdom, or the provisional kingdom. This is the typical kingdom, the type of the true kingdom of God that is to be established in Jesus, Abraham's son.

And promises are partially fulfilled in the history of Abraham's physical descendants, Israel. Their exodus from Egypt out to Mount Sinai, where God enters into a covenant with Israel as a nation, and says, you will be my very own people.

[34 : 59] There, you're my people. And he gives them his law so that they might live under his rule and blessing. And under Joshua, they enter the promised land, God's place. And there, his presence is with them.

And all through, his presence is with them in the tabernacle, and later in the temple. And under the reins of King David and Solomon, Israel reaches the highest point of peace and prosperity.

They were God's people in God's place under God's rule and blessing. But there were still many aspects of God's promises to Abraham that were unfulfilled, not to mention the least of which is that all the nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

And the problem of the kingdom, even at its pinnacle under David and Solomon, was human sin. It was the continual disobedience cycle of Israel, of the people of God.

Clearly, that's not the fullness of what God intended and what he promised concerning his kingdom. So it's a partial, provisional, typical kingdom of what was to come.

[36 : 03] But then, fifthly, we have the prophesied kingdom. We start to come into the prophets in that phase of revelation. Because Israel's sin soon led to the dismantling of the kingdom.

It's now divided in two. As Israel splits after Solomon's reign, Israel to the north now and Judah to the south. Two hundred years later, the northern kingdom is destroyed by the Assyrians as God's judgment for their sin.

A hundred years later, the southern kingdom was conquered and taken away into Babylon. They're not walking under God's rule. So they're not enjoying God's blessing, but rather his curses and his judgments.

And as they turned away from God, God sends them prophets who told them of his coming judgments that would fall upon them for their sin. But he also sent them those prophets with messages of hope about a future.

A future for them. A future time when Messiah would come and establish the kingdom of God. To fulfill the promises. And in 500 BC, the people of Judah were allowed to return to their homeland.

[37:08] But that was not the promised blessing. As you can see in Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi, you still have human sin. Corrupting the kingdom.

There's still a problem. And so the Old Testament ends, waiting for God's king to appear, to introduce the kingdom. Then we come to the New Testament. There's three parts to it. Number six, the present kingdom. 400 years of silence passed under the Old Testament prophets. And then the Lord Jesus began his ministry with these words. The time has come.

The kingdom of God is at hand. The wait is over. God's king has come to establish God's kingdom. And Jesus Christ proved that he had the power to undo the curse.

And to put everything right again. He showed that by his miracles. And by his perfect life and atoning death and resurrection, he would deal with man's greatest problem.

[38:04] His sin. His rebellion. And he would bring sinful man back into relationship with God. Through the blood of the new covenant. So whoever believes on him belongs to God's people.

And looks forward to eternal life in his eternal kingdom. That's the present kingdom that Christ came to establish. Then seventh, the proclaimed kingdom.

Though his work of accomplishing salvation is finished by his life, death, and resurrection and ascension. He's not yet fully applied all the benefits of this great salvation.

He went back to heaven and he's coming back again to finish the job. To complete his kingdom. So the kingdom of God has truly come to our hearts. As his people.

But we live in this period between his first coming and his second coming. The period when God's kingdom in Christ is to be proclaimed. That's why it's called the proclaimed kingdom.

[39:02] Because it's to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. To all the nations. To all peoples. That more and more people might become part of this God's people.

Made up of Jew and Gentile. And might enter the kingdom through the new birth and faith in Jesus Christ. The proclaimed kingdom. That's what we're living in right now.

This proclaimed kingdom as we're proclaiming the kingdom of God. And lastly, the perfected kingdom. When Christ will return one day and will separate all people into two groups.

His unbelieving enemies will be separated from him eternally in hell. And his believing people will be perfected and join him, Christ the king, in a perfectly restored creation.

And then at last, all the promises will be completely fulfilled. The book of Revelation reveals a fully restored and perfected kingdom of God on earth. We have God's people.

[39:58] Christians from all nations. All people groups. All languages. In God's place. The new heavens. And the new earth. The home of righteousness.

Where God's immediate presence will be. And under God's rule and blessing. And because they are sinless and incapable of sinning. Nothing can spoil this happy ending.

They will indeed live happily ever after. As God's people. In God's big place. Under God's rule and blessing.

That's the big picture of the Bible. That's the story. That's the plan. That's what God is doing and has been doing in human history. And that eight point outline sets the stage then for where we'll be going in the next eight lessons.

As we'll dig deeper into each one of these stages of the kingdom of God. So next week, we're looking at the pattern of the kingdom.

[41:00] And we see that in the opening chapters of the Bible. So your homework is to read Genesis 1 and 2. And see the pattern. I was going to say if you want to have fun, you can read the last two chapters of the Bible as well.

Just to whet your appetite. And to see how the kingdom is going to end. And to see the themes that are found in Genesis.

Are also found in Revelation 21 and 22. But for next week then, the pattern of the kingdom. Genesis 1 and 2. And I want you to memorize our working definition of God's kingdom.

So class, once more before you're dismissed. The kingdom of God is God's people. In God's place. Under God's rule and blessing.

You're dismissed. Thank you.