

Dispensationalism — Kingdom (Creation)

KINGDOM AND CREATION (Genesis 1-11)

1. KINGDOM CREATED (GEN 1)

"Genesis 1 reveals the glories of God's creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). In six days God created a spectacular universe full of wonder and mystery—the sun and planets, animals, birds, fish, vegetation, land, and sea. This will be the realm for God's mediatorial kingdom."

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 56.

1A) God instructs man to be fruitful and multiply:

Genesis 1:28 NASB

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

1B) God instructs man to rule and subdue:

Genesis 1:26 NASB

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

"Second, God instructs man to "rule" and "subdue" the creation. The Hebrew term for "rule," which is used twice in Genesis 1:26-28, is *r̄ad̄ah* and means "have dominion," "rule," or "dominate."⁵ It is used later of the Messiah's future reign in Psalm 110:2: "The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Rule [*r̄ad̄ah*] in the midst of Your enemies.'" The word for "subdue" is *k̄abaš*, which means "dominate" or "bring into bondage."⁶ The term "especially speaks of the work of a king (e.g., 2 Sam. 8:11)."⁷ Both verbs "rule" and "subdue" are linked to dominion... This is evident in man's naming of the animals, which was a demonstration of dominion (see Gen 2:19-20)."

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 61.

2. THE KINGDOM CONSTITUTION (GEN 2:15-17)

"This command did not function as a call for Adam and Eve to merit or work for their salvation. Adam was created as a son and king in fellowship with God. Instead, this was an opportunity for these volitional beings to willingly express obedience to their Creator with their hearts. Avoiding the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was to be an expression of worship. The command also established God-imposed limitations for Adam. Adam had many privileges, but he must obey God and operate within His framework. He must do so as a faithful steward of the task given to him by God. He needed to understand and show that his kingship was to operate under the recognition of the ultimate King—God."

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 65.

3. THE KINGDOM MISSION FAILED: THE FALL (GEN 3)

3A) Satan Pursued the "Anti-Kingdom" Program

"Satan sought to foil God's kingdom program by bringing down God's image-bearers. From this point on, the great cosmic battle between God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom will dominate history. In declaring his independence from God man experienced suffering and death. Spiritual separation from God appeared immediately and physical death would follow. The ground was cursed. Consequently, man's mission to rule and subdue the earth on God's behalf was a failure, at least for now. God created man in His image with all the gifts, capacities, and talents to rule His wonderful creation, but man decided to serve himself and plunge the world into disaster. Man still possessed the image of God and the mandate to rule

and subdue the earth remained (see Ps 8), but the task now was doomed”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 66.

3B) The Promised King

“The concept of “seed” has both a many and a single element to it. Not only will there be “enmity” between the serpent (Satan) and the woman, this battle will continue through their descendants (“between your seed and her seed”). This has been an ongoing war throughout human history. Yet this battle will come to a climax when an individual from the seed of the woman, a “He,” brings victory. This “He” (Jesus, Gal 3:16) will bruise the head of the serpent, who is Satan. While Satan will inflict harm on this coming deliverer (“you shall bruise him on the heel”), the victorious seed of the woman will deliver a mortal wound to Satan. The victory will ultimately come to the righteous seed from the woman, yet not without cost.”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 68.

“Since the devil’s work is not only spiritual in character but also physical and institutional in its effects, we should interpret Genesis 3:15 as God’s promise to restore not only Adam’s spiritual rule but also his physical rule on earth and in time before the advent of the new heavens and earth, which will be eternal. Clearly, this dominion will be exercised not by the first Adam but by the second/last Adam as the representative of a new kind of humanity.”

— Chung, *Toward the Reformed and Covenantal Theology of Premillennialism*, 140–141.

4. THE KINGDOM AND THE UNIVERSAL FLOOD (GEN 6-9)

“After the flood, Noah functioned much like Adam in that Noah was the new representative of humanity through whom God’s purposes would proceed. In a way similar to Adam, God tells Noah to “be fruitful and multiply” and “populate the earth abundantly” (Gen 9:7). Also, God told Noah, “I will establish my covenant with you” (Gen 6:18). This covenant involved the human race along with the birds and animals (6:18–20). In Genesis 9:8–10 God again says He will “establish” His “covenant” with Noah, Noah’s descendants, and “every living creature.” God would never again destroy the earth with water (9:11).”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 71.

“The certainty of other covenants is, at times, anchored in the order of nature promised in this first covenant. In Jer 33:20–21, God employs the unfailing regularity of the natural order as a guarantee of the covenant with David (2 Samuel 7) and the covenant with Levi (Numbers 17; 25:10–13). Even God’s covenant of unfailing kindness and peace toward Israel is hereby assured (Isa 54:9–10).”

— Irvin A. Busenitz, *Introduction to the Biblical Covenants: The Noahic Covenant and the Priestly Covenant*, The Master’s Seminary Journal 10 (Fall 1999): 186.

5. NATIONS IN THE KINGDOM PROGRAM (GEN 10-11)

“Here “nations” (goyim) are mentioned twice and are linked with three concepts: “land,” “language,” and “families.” The term for “land” is eretz, a word found in Genesis 1:1 concerning God creating the heavens and the “earth” (eretz). Soon, man was commanded to “fill the earth (eretz)” (Gen 1:28) and this command is repeated after the flood (Gen 9:1). Thus, a strong link exists between the creation in Genesis 1, the conditions after the flood (Gen 9:1), and the nations in Genesis 10–11. In addition, Andrew Kim observes that these elements of nation, land, family, and language, “are echoed in the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12 where Abraham is commanded to leave his country (eres) to become a great nation (goy) to bless all the families (misphaha) of the earth.” This truth establishes a strong connecting link between the nations of Genesis 10–11 and what God will do through Abraham and Israel starting in Genesis 12.”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 74–75.

“The Babel incident of Genesis 11:1–9 is important for two main reasons. First, it explains how the nations came to exist. Second, it reveals man’s continual defiance to God and His commands, specifically rebellion to God’s specific command for man to spread over the earth. This second point will be discussed first.”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 75-76.

“Part of the reason God’s kingdom has not yet come stems from fallen mankind’s consistent antagonism to God’s sovereign purpose for His own earthly kingdom.”

— Barrick, *The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament*, 175.

“With the events of Genesis 12, the focus shifts to Abraham and the great nation of Israel. Israel will dominate the storyline after this chapter. Yet grasping a proper connection between Genesis 10–11 and Genesis 12 is important. The Table of Nations is the context from which Abraham and the nation Israel will occur. Genesis 10–11 provides the context for Israel to be the platform for universal blessings. God’s purposes for the nation Israel are not simply for the benefit of Israel alone. God’s uses Israel as a vessel to bless all people groups.”

— Michael J. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God*, EPub, (Lampion Press, LLC, 2017), 75-79.