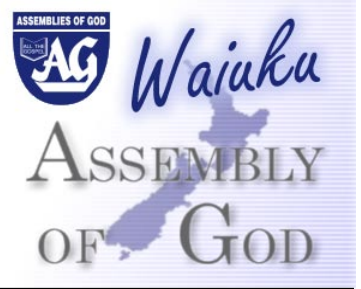


Small Group Discussion Outline



PART ONE IN OUR "LIVING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD" SERIES

The purpose of this week's study is to define the Kingdom of God so we have a foundation on which to build the rest of this series.

The Bible is filled with references to and descriptions of the Kingdom of God. The Old Testament hinges on the Kingdom of God, Jesus' entire ministry revolves around the Kingdom of God, the Bible concludes with an image of the establishing of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is something we need to understand.

The Bible reveals four different aspects of the Kingdom of God. A basic definition of the Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is accomplished.



1. ***What comes to mind when you think of the word "kingdom"?***
2. ***Do you think your concept of a kingdom influences your perception of God's Kingdom?***

FOUR ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. THE KINGDOM OF GOD - ETERNAL



Read: 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 47:2; Psalm 96:10



3. ***What is the scope of God's Kingdom according to these verses?***

In one sense the Kingdom of God is the whole universe and everything in it because He made it all and because He is God.

At present we do not see the Kingdom of God in this way; people get sick, life isn't perfect, and disasters happen. If the Kingdom of God is where God's perfect rule is established then there is obviously something incomplete about what we presently experience.

The Old Testament tells the story of how God created humans to be the centre of His attention and affection, and that they were given the opportunity to respond to this with love and obedience to God.

Time and time again the Old Testament reveals that mankind has failed to maintain the requirements of a relationship with their Holy God.

What Is The Kingdom of God?

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PO Box 196
Waiuku 1852
New Zealand

God created humans and gave them free will so that they could voluntarily respond to His love; God doesn't want a world full of robots programmed to worship Him without choice. At present God does not exercise His complete authority because His revealed plan is for humans to voluntarily acknowledge Him. God created us to be the object of His love and to love Him in return. History reveals that, beginning with Adam and Eve, mankind has failed to consistently respond to God's revelation of His love - this is why His Kingdom is not fully revealed throughout the universe.

2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD - LOCAL



Read: Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 33:5 (and footnotes); Isaiah 43:15



4. What is the scope of God's Kingdom according to these verses?

In a unique way, God was King over the nation of Israel. They are His 'Chosen People' through which God promised to fully reveal His Kingdom. This reveals a better picture of the Kingdom of God in that throughout the Old Testament we see God's promises of leadership, blessing and protection over Israel if they fully obey His commands. We are given a picture of a nation ruled by God through His commands and which God's will for them to be blessed is evident when they do so.

This aspect is also deficient because Israel rebelled against God - God's rule was not established.

3. THE KINGDOM OF GOD - FUTURE



Read: Isaiah 24:23; Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 15:3-4; Revelation 21:3-4



5. What is the scope of God's Kingdom according to these verses?

These verses speak of when Jesus returns to earth in person, as He has promised He will do. He will establish God's literal Kingdom on earth where God's perfect rule is perfectly accomplished.

We will leave this discussion on the future Kingdom of God at that because it is not relevant to this particular series of studies. This is, however, the hope we hold on to!

4. THE KINGDOM OF GOD - PRESENT



Read: Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:17-21

In Luke 4:17-21 Jesus reveals that He is the Messiah that Israel had been waiting for since the times of the Old Testament. The Messiah heralded the arrival of the Kingdom of God. When Jesus came to earth the Kingdom of God literally entered history, although not in the way they expected.

We will spend the rest of this series examining the Kingdom of God as it relates to us in our lives today. Seeking the Kingdom of God means accepting that Jesus is God, that His death and resurrection are the only way that we can be at peace with God, and then making Jesus King of every area of our lives. In other words, bringing our lives under His rule and experiencing His blessing as a result!

WAIUKU ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Ph: (09) 235 7341 **Mob:** (021) 187 1928 **Email:** waiukuag@wag.org.nz **Web:** www.wag.org.nz