

What is the Bible about?

The Kingdom of Heaven/Kingdom of God: It is about the mystery by which the power of God works to form this world into the Holy City, the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

*"See, the home^[a] of God is among mortals.
He will dwell^[b] with them;
they will be his peoples,^[c]
and God himself will be with them and be their God;^[d]
⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for^[e] the first things have passed away."*

*⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ Then he said to me, "**It is done!** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. Revelation 21:2-7*

The time is fulfilled, now

The kingdom of God is here, now

Turn and think differently, and believe in this good news

—Jesus, Mark 15

What is the Kingdom of God?

"it is not about someplace else called heaven, nor about somebody at a distance called God. Rather, it is about this place here, in all its *thisness* and *placeness*, and about the intimate and immediate Holy One who, at no distance from us at all, moves mysteriously to make creation true (whole, complete, perfect) both to itself and to God... The force of phrases like 'the city of God' and 'the kingdom of God' say that the Bible is concerned with the perfecting of what God made, not with the trashing of it - with the resurrection of [creation's] native harmonies and orders, not with the replacement of [the world] by something alien. To be sure, 'city' and 'kingdom' are different images, with differing lights to shed on the mystery; but ... they are both marvelously earthy revelations of what God wants this world to become."*

How does the Bible tell of God's attempts to reconcile creation's current situation from fractured and fallen to the "Holy city, the New Jerusalem?"

- a) Using God's omnipotence, Heavy-handed, direct power (Noah and the Flood) God, having found all human attempts to build the city hopeless, decides simply to wash everybody but Noah down the drain. Use the force you need to get the job done.*
- b) Mysteriously, non-intervention, through a back door (God's covenant with Noah) "By the end of the story, however - when the final, scriptural point of the episode is made - it turns out to reveal a different notion of power entirely: God says he is never going to do anything like that again. He says that his answer to the evil that keeps the world from becoming the city of God will not, paradoxically, involve direct intervention on behalf of the city. Instead, he makes a covenant of nonintervention with the world: he sets his bow in the cloud - the symbolic development of which could be either that he hangs all his effective weapons against wickedness up on the wall or, more bizarrely still, that he points them skyward, at himself instead of us.*

Paradoxical power: power that looks for all the world like weakness, intervention that seems indistinguishable from nonintervention. More than that, it is guaranteed to stop no determined evildoers whatsoever.*

Abraham, childless
Slavery in Egypt
Wandering in the desert
Homeland for only few hundred years
Captive in Babylon
Under Roman occupation
Messiah arrives, dies, disappears
Temple is destroyed by Romans
Diaspora

"Since Noah, God has evidently had almost no interest in using direct power to fix up the world. Why? you ask. Well, the first answer is, I don't know, and neither does anyone else. God's reasons are even more hidden than his methods."*

Kingdom of God: We mistakenly hear Jesus' message about the "kingdom of God" as if he's trying to sell an exciting new plan for establishing world peace. But to Jesus' Jewish audience, to proclaim the kingdom of God was to make a shocking announcement that God's promised Messiah had arrived, because the task of the Messiah was to establish God's kingdom on earth. Jesus was making an earth-shattering claim that he was the Christ, and that God's redemption of the world would come through him.²²

Tverberg, Lois. *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus* (p. 27). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Mystery of the Kingdom: For by Jesus' ascension, by making a departure from this world the capstone of all his earthly acts, he underscores once and for all what he said with ever-

increasing clarity through his whole ministry. The kingdom of God, the Ascension insists, does not come about because of what the world does to itself - nor even, in any obvious sense, because of what God does to the world. Rather, the kingdom already exists in the King himself, and when he ascends, the whole world goes with him (John 12:32). **[it is finished]** It is not that someday Jesus will do this, that, and the other thing, and then the Kingdom will come. It is not, for example, that at some future date the dead will rise or that in some distant consummation we will reign with him. Rather, it is that we have already been buried with him in baptism, and that we are already risen with him through faith in the operation of God who raised him from the dead, and that we are now - in this and every moment - enthroned together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

*Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom. ©1985 Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan

The kingdom of God is hidden. Matthew 11:25, Matt 13:35, Rev 2:17, Colossians 3:3-4