

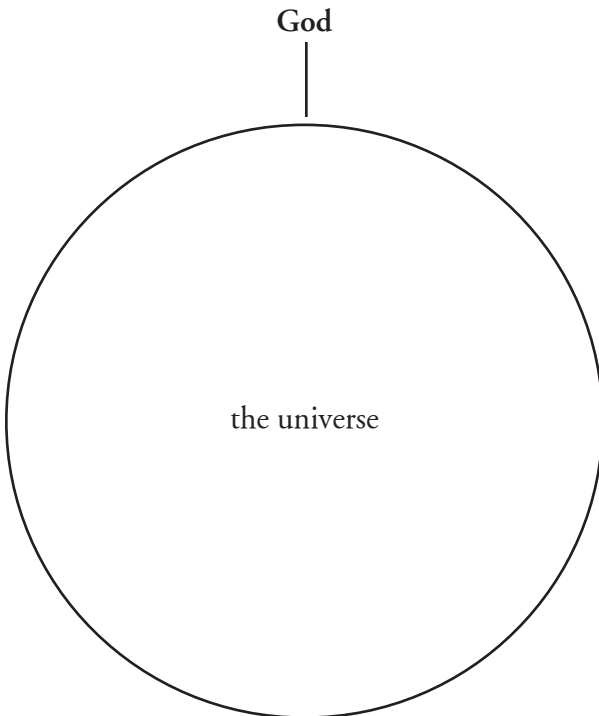
WHAT GOD IS DOING

and how you fit in

Dr. Glenn Parkinson

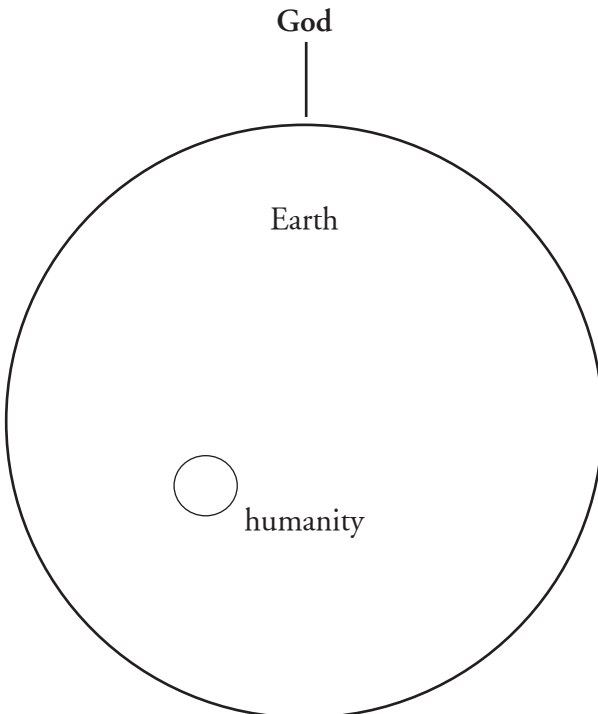
The Bible tells us all about what God is doing—not just at this moment, but throughout time, from the very beginning to the eternal future.

The story begins with creation. God created all of matter, energy, space and time—what we call the *universe*. The universe had a beginning. God did not. God created all things in order to display, in a tangible way, what He is like.



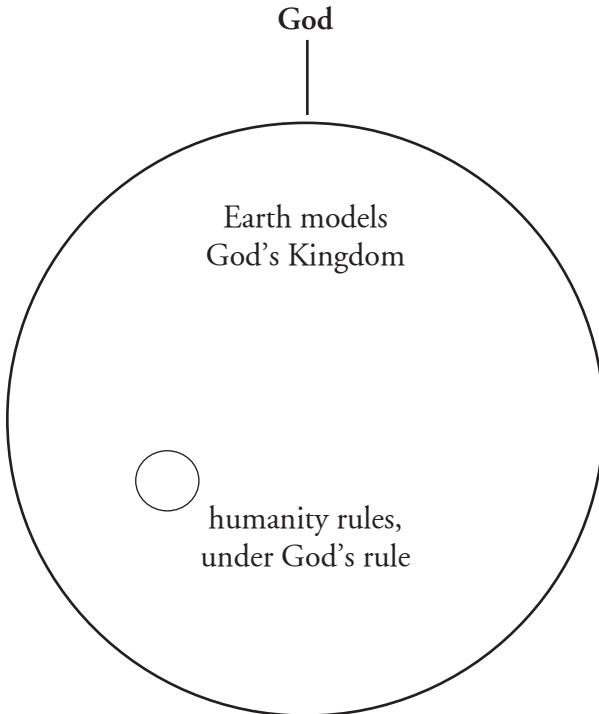
The Earth holds a special place in the universe, because here God created a creature capable of expressing His character in a unique way. God originally created mankind ...

- with the unusual freedom to consciously embrace His design (spiritually bright on the inside) and
- without any moral fault (smooth relationships on the outside).

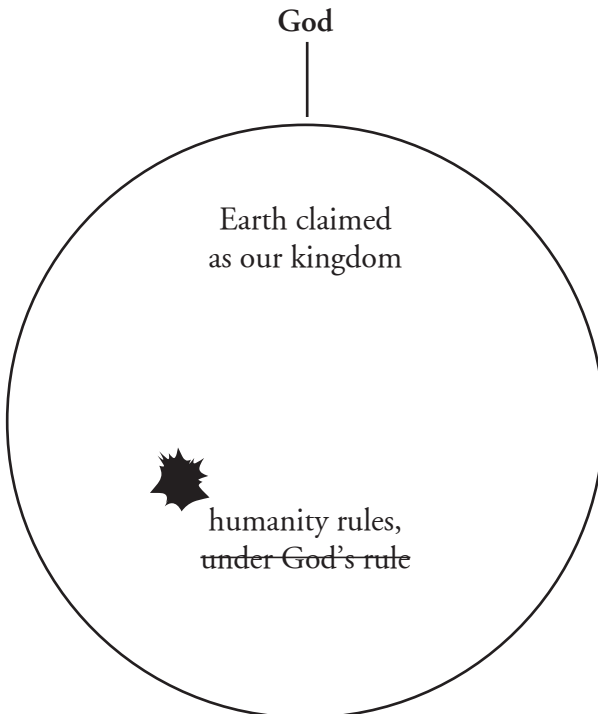


If the universe is a “kingdom” God created to joyfully rule, then Earth was designed to be a miniature model of that kingdom. Humanity was set apart to model God’s rule on this wonderful planet. We were charged to exercise responsible, capable and compassionate rule by ...

- choosing to love God’s authority and design (remaining bright on the inside) and
- living out that design in practice (remaining perfectly smooth on the outside).

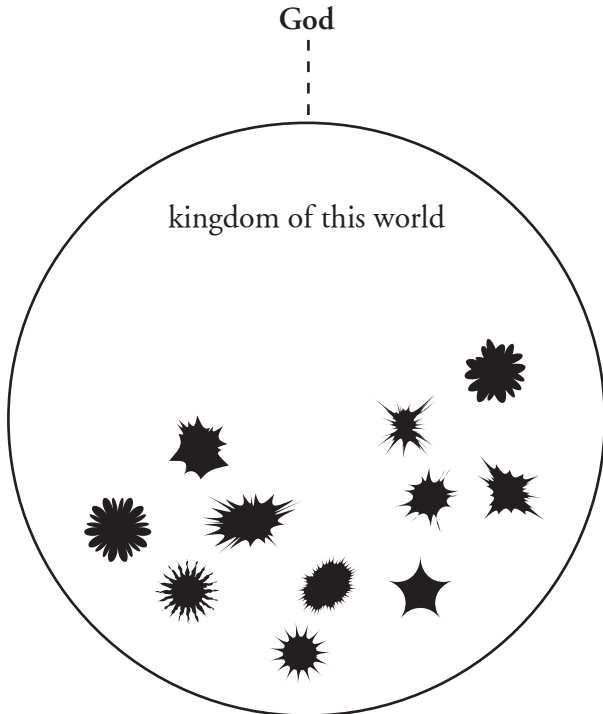


At the very beginning, mankind accepted the opportunity to exercise our dominion over all life. But at the same time, we denied our Creator's rightful rule over us. When we denied God's place and God's design, our inner souls became spiritually dark and dead toward God. As a result, we began living in ways contrary to His design. Since then, our lifestyles have formed sharp edges that become easily bruised and easily bruise others.



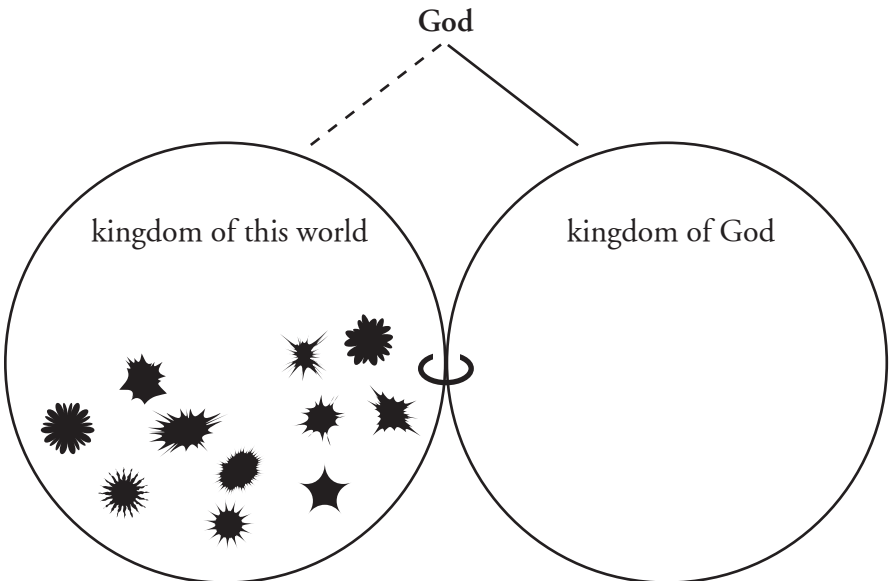
Over time, people have developed many patterns of religion, morality and politics. But from God's perspective, all are misshapen, because they are designed by souls in the dark. We scrape and cut each other. We hurt ourselves and make a mockery of the One whose image we were made to model.

In response, God separated Himself from our company. Separated from our source of life, spiritual death led to cultural and physical death as well. To be true to Himself, God will ultimately reject the human race which has mocked Him and ruined the world entrusted to our care.



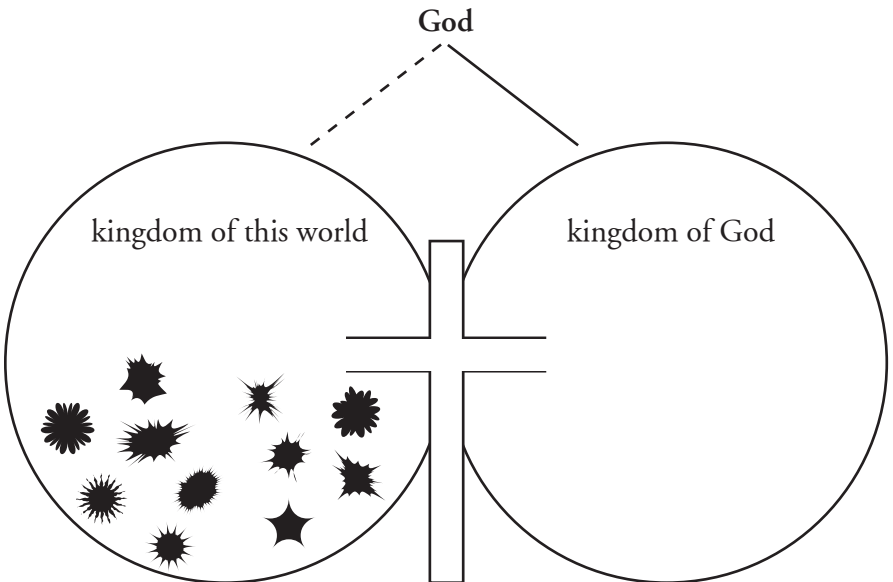
But instead of rejecting us all in eternal judgment, God devised a wonderful alternative to accomplish His original design. He created a spiritual kingdom on Earth, at first modeled in the ancient nation of Israel but now spanning all nations and peoples.

This spiritual kingdom is not a place, but rather a condition of the heart. It exists wherever people affirm His rule once again. It is spiritually linked to the world at large at one single entry point – one way back to life as God intended it, under His authority and blessing.



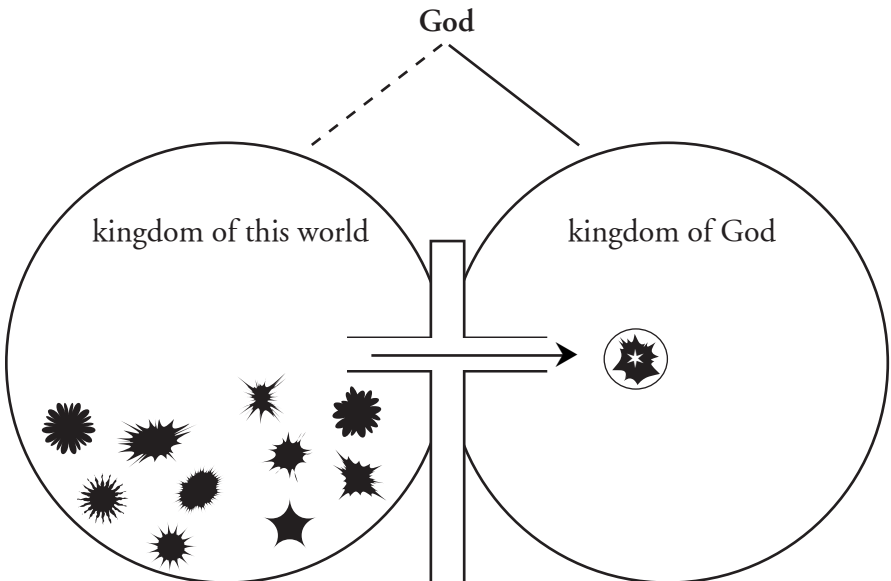
God forged this doorway by personally entering our world as the man known as Jesus Christ. Christ's voluntary but undeserved death as a criminal allowed Him to serve as a substitute for others, absorbing God's just punishment for human wickedness. That left God morally free to forgive those who have done wrong. Christ's later resurrection from the dead created a brand new life for those willing to leave their old way of life behind.

Because Jesus' death and resurrection uniquely honored *both* God's holy hatred of sin *and* God's compassionate love for broken people, Jesus became the doorway for mankind to return to God.



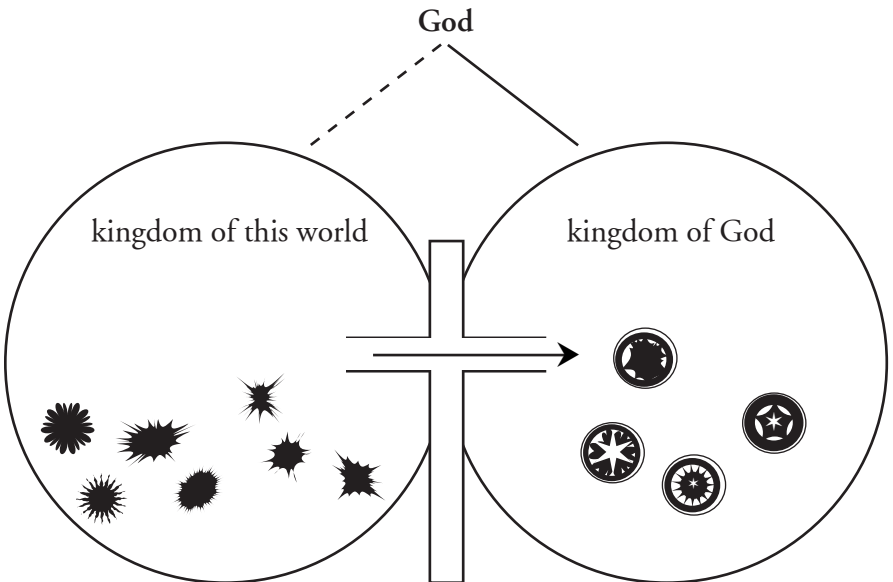
Faith moves us through the doorway. Faith in Christ spiritually transfers a person into God's kingdom (back under His rule and blessing). The Spirit of God uses our faith in Christ to do two things:

- God “covers” us with Christ’s reputation. Faith joins people to Christ in such a way that our reputations are exchanged. On the cross, Jesus voluntarily took upon Himself mankind’s record of moral failure. Through faith, we are credited with His perfection, regardless of our past failures and ongoing weaknesses. God accepts us as without fault, as if the smooth circle of Christ’s perfect life were wrapped around our jagged edges.
- God also brings to life the inner core of our dark soul. While many old shadows of selfish thought and wicked behavior remain, down deep the light of God’s influence slowly grows. The same faith that covers us with Christ’s reputation kindles a spreading fire within that consumes our old way of life with a new passion for God’s will. This inner light starts out small, but it grows over time.



While the Christian religion is vulnerable to human failure and abuse, personal faith in Christ unites people of every nation, race and culture into a spiritual kingdom where they embrace God's rule and hope in His blessing.

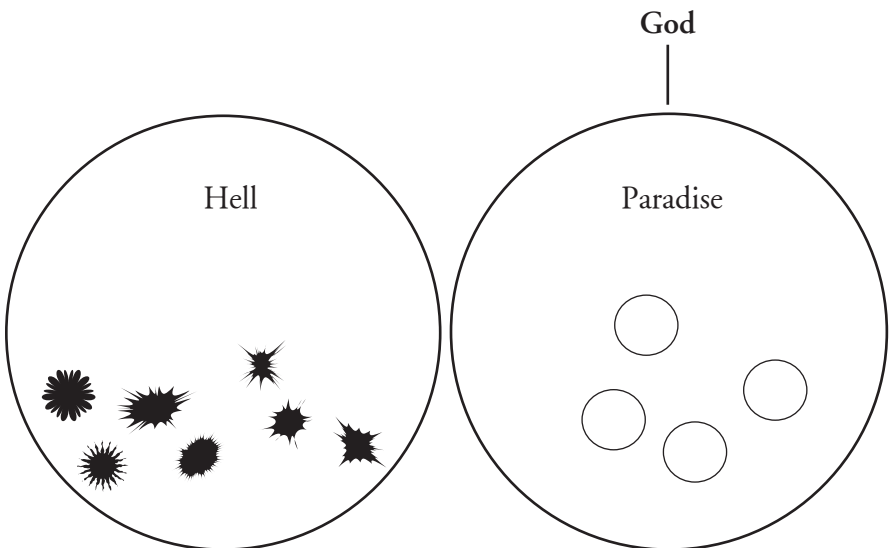
As believers individually mature, the light of new life overcomes more and more inner darkness and begins to smooth out the rough edges of their lifestyle. At the same time, they are covered by Christ's reputation, even with their remaining imperfections. God accepts them all as perfect, for Christ's sake, from the moment of personal faith.



When God's spiritual kingdom is finished to His satisfaction, Jesus Christ will return to complete the process of separating human rebellion from God.

Those remaining in rebellion will be cast off, forever abandoned to their own willfulness.

Those who belong to Him shall find their entire being, body and soul, perfected in a rebuilt Paradise that fulfills God's original purpose. A place where humanity forever rules the Earth under the rule of God in wisdom, justice, love and great joy – just as the Lord originally intended.



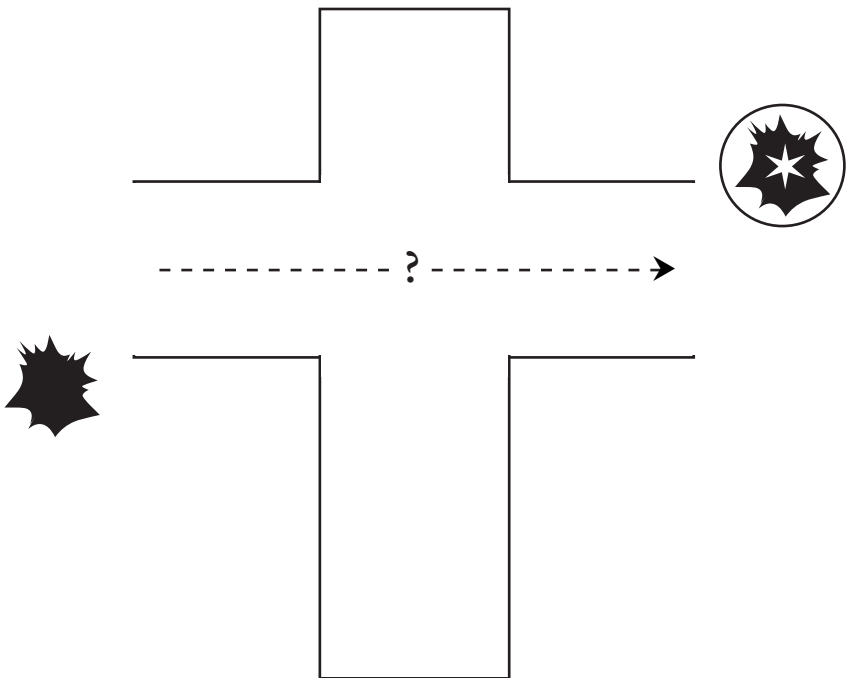
That's what God is doing in the world. The Bible reveals that God designed life for a wonderful purpose, and that God will fulfill that purpose through Jesus Christ.

How do you fit in?

How do you *want* to fit in?

Faith in Jesus means:

- believing that God will cover you with Christ's reputation,
- trusting Jesus to create new life in your soul that will illuminate and transform you from the inside out, and
- following Jesus into God's eternal kingdom, where you get to live life as God designed it.



I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

(John 5:24)



SEVERNA PARK
evangelical presbyterian^{inc.}

110 Ritchie Highway - Pasadena, MD 21146
410-544-5013 - www.spepchurch.org