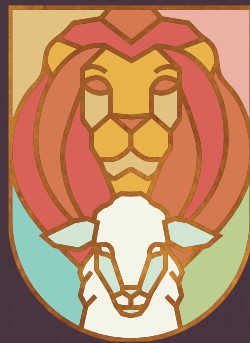


S T U D Y   G U I D E

THE  
KINGDOM  
OF GOD

*AND THE WORK of CHRIST*



BRANDON D. CROWE

# The Kingdom of God and the Work of Christ

STUDY GUIDE



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

*The Kingdom of God and the Work of Christ Study Guide*

© 2026 by Ligonier Ministries

Published by Ligonier Ministries

421 Ligonier Court,

Sanford, FL 32771

Ligonier.org

ISBN 978-1-64289-745-6

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# How to Use This Study Guide

This study guide includes a chapter synopsis, a lesson objective, key passages, key points, and discussion questions from each chapter in *The Kingdom of God and the Work of Christ*, as well as questions that focus on a relevant passage of Scripture from each chapter. Participants should first read each corresponding chapter of the book in order to make the best use of this guide.

**Chapter Synopsis:** This section summarizes the material in the chapter and provides a reminder of what the chapter covered. It serves to help readers remember what they've already read in the book.

**Lesson Objective:** This section explains the purpose of the chapter and the intended outcome of the study-guide lesson.

**Key Passages:** This section quotes several passages from the chapter so that readers can remember some of the more significant things the author said. It can also serve as a starting point for discussion if the group leader would like to ask questions or provide thoughts related to excerpts from the book.

**Key Points:** This section outlines many of the basic ideas that the author mentioned in the chapter. It helps readers recall not just the big idea of the chapter but also its supporting ideas and their flow.

**Scripture Reading:** This section highlights one of the chapter's key points in God's Word. It helps readers identify the scriptural basis of important Christian doctrines and develops their ability to understand Scripture through questions about the reading. These questions are also ideal for group study.

**Reflection Questions:** This section provides readers with questions that could be asked of themselves or in a small-group setting. The questions are designed to help readers understand the chapter and apply that knowledge to their lives.

**Prayer:** This section closes the study with an opportunity to come before the Lord in prayer based on what readers have learned.

# The Kingdom and the Four Gospels

## CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

Lessons about the kingdom of God fill the Gospels, but what is the kingdom of God? To understand what “the kingdom” means in the Gospels, we must necessarily understand how to read the Gospels. Many interpretations of the Gospels fail to read them as complete narratives that have the Old Testament as their background and have Jesus Christ as their focus. Nevertheless, once an appropriate guide for reading the Gospels is established, the kingdom can begin to be defined.

## LESSON OBJECTIVE

This chapter will provide a guide for reading and interpreting the Gospels and will begin to define the kingdom of God.

## KEY PASSAGES

*How would you define the kingdom of God? This is not an insignificant question; it relates quite centrally to what you believe about theology and the gospel message. It makes a big difference. Getting this right will help us stay oriented to theological true north; getting this wrong threatens to lead us off the straight path into a theological ditch. (p. 3)*

*Think of reading the Gospels like being on a road trip where we take in all the sights along the way and contextualize each story within the larger framework. All the twists and turns should make more sense by the time we get to the end. This also means that we need to keep Jesus and His work front and center. (p. 6)*

*When we read about the kingdom, we must not read it in a way that abstracts the kingdom teaching from the person and work of Jesus. Jesus is the anointed King of the kingdom. This is one of the goals of the present study: to explain the meaning of the kingdom in relation to Jesus and what He does. (p. 9)*

*“The kingdom, it was believed, comes when the gospel is spread, hearts are changed, sin and error overcome, righteousness cultivated, a living communion with God established.” (p. 13)*

### KEY POINTS

**The Kingdom in the Gospels** (pp. 1–3): The phrase “the kingdom of God” fills the Gospels. What is meant by this phrase often escapes us or receives little attention, but it is imperative that every Christian study the Gospels’ use of this phrase and learn what Jesus means by “the kingdom of God.”

**Reading the Gospels** (pp. 3–10): When reading the Gospels, the reader is not to doubt the historical accuracy of the narratives. Neither are the four accounts meant to be read in isolation from one another or as carbon copies of one another. A story or lesson from a gospel must also never be interpreted apart from its place in the complete narrative of its gospel. Instead, the Gospels must be read with the Old Testament as their background, with consideration for their genre as narrative, and with Jesus as their focus.

**Misunderstandings of the Kingdom** (pp. 10–12): Some would define the kingdom of God merely as a way of living. Others say that it is a social movement for the good of the poor. Both these views fail to account for Christ’s work and the Old Testament background to the idea of the kingdom. It is also important to note that the kingdom is neither totally future nor totally present. The Gospels treat it as both present and future.

**A Definition of the Kingdom** (pp. 12–14): While not the final definition of the kingdom in this book, Geerhardus Vos’ definition teaches that the kingdom concerns itself with the gospel, changes lives by changing hearts, overcomes sin and error, and refers to a special reign and domain of God.

### SCRIPTURE READING

**Luke 1:26–33** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he

## THE KINGDOM AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

- In this chapter, Dr. Crowe mentioned that the kingdom’s background is in the Old Testament. What Old Testament ideas are the background for Gabriel’s proclamation in Luke 1?
- What Old Testament texts might be helpful references for studying this passage?

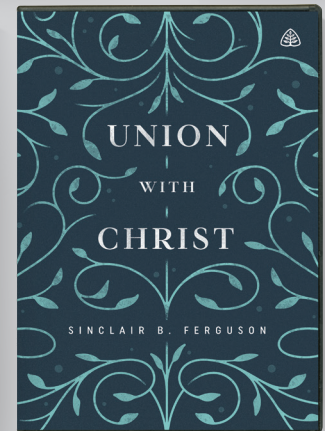
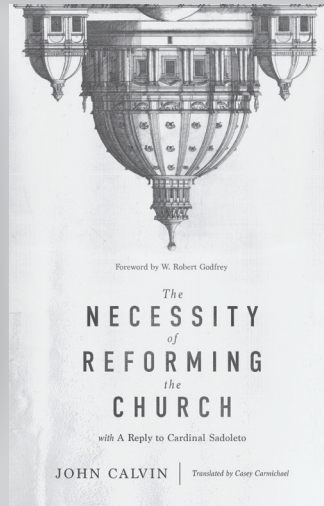
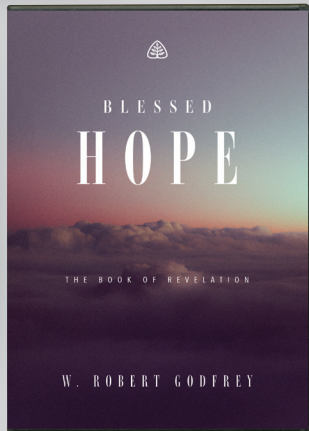
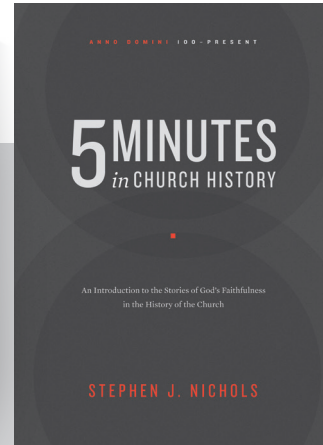
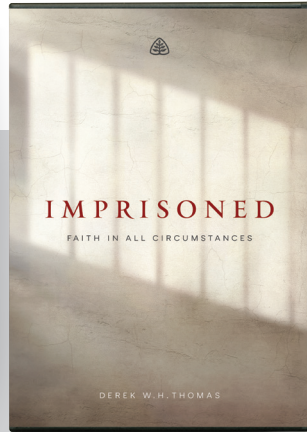
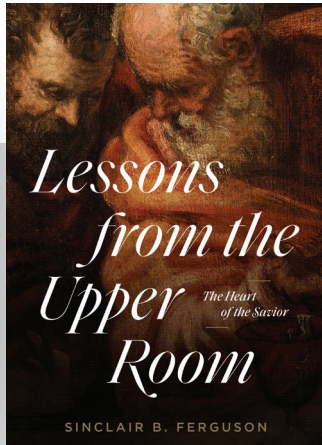
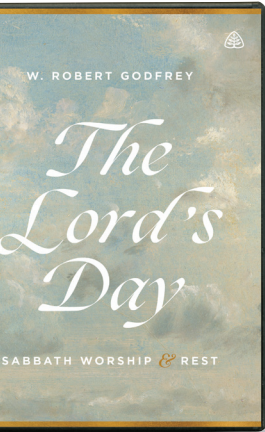
### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Dr. Crowe mentioned that the four Gospels often illumine each other’s accounts of an event or lesson. What are some stories or lessons in the Gospels that you are confused by?
2. What three rules did Dr. Crowe provide for reading the Gospels?
3. In what genre are the Gospels meant to be read? What are the implications of reading the Gospels according to this genre?
4. Dr. Crowe mentioned that the work of Christ and the problem of sin rule out defining the kingdom merely as an ethical system. Why is this so? How do the concepts of sin and Christ’s work discredit this definition?

### PRAYER

- Praise the Father as the omnipotent God who powerfully establishes His King and His kingdom.
- Confess times when you have neglected communion with God by failing to study His Word.
- Thank God for giving His church a lasting account of its Savior in the four Gospels.
- Ask God to lead you by His Spirit into a better understanding of the Gospels.

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