

## Not of this world

Tonight we start a new teaching series which moves us temporarily away from a verse by verse study through a book in the Bible to a topical study on the Kingdom of God. Jesus spoke a lot about His Kingdom and how it invades this physical realm on earth. Yet, even then, this concept of the Kingdom, what it is, how to describe it, who belongs to it, how it operates on this earth, how it relates to humanity, how it relates to the enemy, how it relates to the **Beloved**, and so on, can seem like a very amorphous and intangible concept. When God first told me to teach on the Kingdom, my response was: “nooooooooooooooooooooo” (which is a pretty normal response no matter where He tells me to teach). But since it was not a request, here goes.

In our exploration of the Kingdom, what we will find is how intimately it is connected with our studies in **1 Peter** on what it means to live as an alien and stranger in this world. And the reason we are called aliens and strangers in the first place is because of the simple fact that we belong to an entirely different kingdom that not only exists in a different realm but operates within this realm with entirely different rules and priorities. I know the Lord wants us to study the Kingdom as a follow on to **1 Peter** because He wants us to let our brains literally be rewired—transformed—so we can connect to the reality of His Kingdom with our heart, mind, soul, and strength. I believe that, for most of us, this idea of the Kingdom of God is just ethereal and it is comprised of words, ideas, and intellectual musings, but not truly in experience or personal conviction. Yet, the Lord wants His Kingdom to become so real to us and so firmly tangible that we live in this world like so few

have ever lived. He wants us to understand it, grasp it, embrace it, and live in it. He wants us to see it as He sees it and enjoy it the way it is to be enjoyed.

The first most obvious thing about the Kingdom, which although we conceptually know this we still need to address since it goes to the heart of this issue of living in the Kingdom, is that the Kingdom of God is entirely separate from the kingdom of this world; and that is the point of tonight's teaching. These two kingdoms intersect and conflict on many levels; but they are entirely different and stand in opposition to one another. And I want you to understand that the separation between these two kingdoms is far more extreme than any of us have probably understood. The reason being is that far too much of our being still seems to be infected by the kingdom of the world; it's as if it is infused within us. As such that we struggle with understanding the differences. These kingdoms stand in stark contrast to one another, but for most people the distinction is not readily seen; it is all blurred up and foggy even. It is part of the battle strategy of the king who rules the kingdom of the world. If the kingdom of the world can look close enough to the Kingdom of God, then it will continue to dominate the minds and souls of those who should know better and could know better.

But the kingdom of the world has a different king, a different purpose, different players, different rules, different powers and authority, different structures, and is fundamentally comprised of a different character and nature. Through these teachings, Jesus wants to transform our minds in order that we might clearly see the distinctions between the two kingdoms and understand that there is no comingling of kingdoms, there is no cross-over, and the distinctions between the two kingdoms are black and white. And for those who have eyes to see, the Lord wants

you to understand that these two kingdoms do not just stand in opposition to one another, but they are at full-on war with one another. Accordingly, Jesus wants us—the **Beloved**—to be completely unplugged from this worldly kingdom in order that we might see and understand the beauty and glory of the Kingdom of God. He wants us to literally flee the kingdom of the world and leave it behind.

In terms of this separation between the two kingdoms, Jesus, when talking to Pilot who was the Roman Prefect in charge of Judea, addressed this issue immediately before Pilot condemned Jesus to die. Being quite familiar with kingdoms and the ways of kings, Pilot seemed to be oh so confused as to why the Jews were turning in their own “king” to the Romans for punishment.

***John 18:36-37***

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

What can we glean from this passage? First we notice that Jesus makes no claim for this world; He does not argue for any part of it, not even a sliver. Second, He affirms that His Kingdom is not of this world, but is entirely separate from this world. If His Kingdom had any part in this world then His servants would fight for

Him to preserve their right to this world and His right to rule this world. Third, this Kingdom which Jesus talks about, which is not of this world, is His kingdom; He is the King. This phrase is in the *indicative* so it is a statement of fact: Jesus is the King. Fourth, He came into this world for the purpose of testifying to the truth: testifying about Himself. You have to understand that not only was everything Jesus said the truth (**John 8:45**), but this testimony He came to give goes far beyond mere words because Jesus made the claim to be truth (**John 14:6**): "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Truth is a part of Jesus' fundamental character and nature. Thus, if He is the truth and He speaks the truth, then anything that is in opposition to what He says is a flat out lie. And this is what separates these two kingdoms. One is built on the truth and the other is built on a lie. Fifth, there are people who may not yet know it, but they belong to the truth; they belong to Jesus the King. This is proven out because when they hear the words of Jesus, they are able to receive those words. His words become to them their truth and their ultimate authority. That is not how it is with those who are in the kingdom of the world. Jesus said:

**John 8:46-47**

If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.

The implication of all this should be clear. There are those who are of God and those who are not; and the truth is the distinction. For those of you who hear the words of God, this means the world is not your home. This world is not where we

find our identity, our purpose, our meaning, our family, our friends, or any of our true connection points. It is simply where we work. It is where we have been sent on a temporary assignment in support of the kingdom to which we actually belong. We are simply ambassadors to this world begging men and women on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

But even my saying these words does not seem to create much of a response or any radical shift in our thinking, our choices, or our behavior. Again, they are just words; and, although words have the potential for great power and effect, they must be empowered before their true potential is released and realized. We will get to that issue of the empowerment of these amazing truths in another teaching, but I want you to understand something very important about this world which we all seem to love and to which we are so attached. This world's King, its Prince, its ruler, is none other than Lucifer, the devil (the deceiver), whose title is Satan which means "the Opposer." Yes, the kingdom of this world is ruled by Satan, the one who stands in opposition to the Kingdom of God and to the people of the Kingdom of God. And no matter how innocent aspects of this world may look, don't be fooled. It all stands in opposition to God and to the **Beloved**. It is all designed in some way, shape, or form, to hurt you and ruin you.

In **Matthew 4:8-9** we find this interesting dialogue between the devil and Jesus. In this dialogue, the devil offers to turn over to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would simply fall down and worship the devil.

**Matthew 4:8-9**

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

The clear implication of this passage is that Satan, for the time being, holds in his hands the reigns over the kingdoms of this world. The glory of these kingdoms is his and he can give it away if he wants. Those familiar with this scene know that Jesus did not argue with the devil in terms of the devil's right and standing to make such an offer nor did He dispute the devil's claimed possessory interest to the all the kingdoms of the world. This is consistent with what we find throughout the New Testament. In **2 Corinthians 4:4**, the devil is referred to as the god of this world. In **Revelation 2:12-13** we are told that he established his throne of rule and His abode in the ancient city of Pergamum (which is in Turkey). Lucifer physically placed his seat of government in this world of humanity. In **John 12:31**, Jesus made it clear that Satan is the ruler of this world. Then He affirmed this notion in **John 14:30** when he told his disciples at the last supper that the prince of this world was coming for Him. And in **Ephesians 6:12**, Satan and his minions are referred to as the rulers, powers, and the world forces of this darkness.

Therefore, and I am not exaggerating this point, if you love this world in any way shape or form, then you practically love the things which belong to Satan, the one who opposes God. That realization should create a little movement in your being and make you very uncomfortable; and I want you to think deeply about this statement. If you are attached to this world and are trying to get your validation

and approval from those who abide in this world, then you are trying to get your validation and approval from Satan, the one who opposes God and opposes the people of God. This is a very hard truth; but it is truth nonetheless and we need to start getting our heads and our hearts wrapped around this scary and horrifying reality. As I said, these kingdoms are separate and they do not comingle in any way; there is no dual citizenship. I know that so many of us still wish or hope there would be some overlap so we can both be “good” with God and considered great and amazing in the eyes of the world. But that is not how these kingdoms work. There is no overlap in citizenship or in glory.

Next, I want you to understand something—a truth—that is so critical for you to accept. This truth must become an absolute authority in your life. I know that this truth, as with so much of what we are talking about today, is obvious; but for some sick and disturbing reason, far too many of us willfully allow ourselves to be deceived by the enemy. Again, we allow ourselves to be deceived. We cannot claim the absence of knowledge, nor the absence of experience; we must therefore chalk it up to pure foolishness, rebellion, or perhaps stupidity even. Here is the truth: Satan’s kingdom is a kingdom of lies. In fact, Satan’s kingdom was acquired through a lie and has throughout the centuries been built on lies. Through deception, Satan convinced Eve of a lie, a lie that still haunts us today (that we can be good like God). Through imbedding that lie in her soul, he acquired the right for His kingdom to invade the realm of humanity and subject all men and women to his authority. Once again, Satan’s kingdom is a kingdom of lies, it was founded on a lie, and it exits through the lie.

Therefore, whatever it is that you think this world can give you; it is a lie. Whatever it is this world may have promised you; it is a lie. Whatever glory you have received from this world, it will fade. Whatever security and permanence you believe you can find in this world, it will collapse out from under your feet. This world does not satisfy; it never has and it never will. The evidence is everywhere and it is beyond overwhelming—beyond contestation. You don't have to be a genius to understand this reality; yet, we still foolishly struggle accepting the obvious and it is a sad and tragic indictment on the wisdom of man. Earlier I said, "If Jesus is the truth and He always speaks the truth, then anything that does not come from Him is a flat out lie." This is a distinctive that separates these two kingdoms. One is built on the truth and the other is built on a lie. In speaking to the religious leaders of His day (yes, to those who were assigned the responsibility of leading people in the truth and leading people to God), Jesus said:

***John 8:44-45***

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Simple logical reasoning helps us conclude that if there is no truth in the devil, then He has no part in Jesus because Jesus is the truth. This explains why in ***John 14:30*** Jesus said that the prince of this world has no part in Him. Nothing, nothing,



nothing, nothing is shared between these two kingdoms. However, it seems that we—the citizens of the Kingdom of God—keep trying to find a way to force them together. But Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of lies, and you have been lied to. Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of truth, and the King is trying desperately to get you to understand this reality and completely forgo this kingdom of the devil in exchange, 100% exchange, for the Kingdom of God. Your King is a very jealous king, as jealousy is one of His names (**Exodus 34:14**). Thus, He demands a full exchange. That is what He wants and it is all very practical and goes to the very core and fiber of your being.

Who do you value, what do you value, what do you want, and how do you want it? You should be asking yourself those questions because if you are honest and your answers are not defined by the Kingdom of God, then it is true, you love the things of Satan, you have been lied to, and you are living a lie and you will never, never, be satisfied. You will never know rest or peace. You will never have life. Joy will be merely an illusion and true love and intimacy will be just a fiction. And if you actually do belong to the Kingdom of God, then I know that trying to coexist in both kingdoms is tearing you apart. And that should be a sign that you have been compromised and infected and you need to take some drastic action. You can't keep living the way you are and expect things to automatically change given enough time: no, that is delusional. These kingdoms are at war. You have to choose to cling to one or the other or the balance of power in this war will never shift and you will always be in the middle being torn from both sides. Which by the way, is a miserable existence because you know the truth and you know what is possible.

With that said, mark my word, if you are not being torn apart by this dynamic, if you are ok abiding in the kingdom of this world, then it means, without question,

that you do not belong to the Kingdom of God, regardless of the pledges or commitments you have made. The kingdom of the devil and the Kingdom of God are as separate and distinct as is a believer's *Old Sinful Nature* and their **New Creation**. These kingdoms are at war and they don't coexist and they never declare a truce. Don't be deceived.

Going back to **John 18:36-37**, what do you think Jesus mean when He said that His kingdom is not of this realm or not of this world? What do you think I meant when I said that if you love this world in any way shape or form, then you practically love the things which belong to Satan? I am sure some of you were thinking about how you love things in this world like ice cream, great espresso, a good steak, waterfalls, the ocean, beautiful beaches, the mountains, and so on. And instead of listening to me and the point I was making, you were arguing with me in your head about how is it possible that those wonderful things of this world could be wrong or evil. You were probably even thinking that you are not sure you want to give them up—thereby completely missing the point I was making. Don't worry, ice cream, great espresso, the beach, and the like is not what I am talking about and it is not what Jesus was talking about.

Let me make this clear. There is a fundamental Biblical difference between the earth and the things of this earth (the ice cream and the beaches) and this "world" – this kingdom of Satan. We just tend to use both "earth" and "world" interchangeably, but Biblically there is a very important distinction. **1 Corinthians 10:26** which quotes **Psalms 24:1** makes it clear that the earth is the Lord's and all it contains; including every beast, the cattle on a thousand hills, every bird, and everything that moves. Nothing is excluded from this truth for God is the maker of

all things. This is supported by *Psalm 89:11; Psalm 50:10-12; Exodus 9:29;* and *Acts 7:49* (which quotes *Isaiah 66:1*).

Therefore, if the earth is the Lord's, then how can the "world" belong to Satan? The reason is that, just like the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of this world is an unseen kingdom. These are two invisible kingdoms that constantly battle in the heavens and in the earth. These kingdoms have the ability to spiritually invade the natural world (the earth and its inhabitants), and conform it to the image of the conquering kingdom. This is our reality and it is the spiritual truth which undergirds the statement in *Ephesians 6:12* which says, "For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Thus, our true fight is not against people, but against the darkness which stems from the "world" – a darkness that has permeated the people of the world. Our true enemy, our true foe, is unseen and does all of its evil work and whispering of lies in unseen realms. Clearly the faculties of the human body, mind, and soul has access to this unseen realm, which is kind of mind boggling. And we can easily assess the fruit of this foe's efforts as it plays out in the realm of the natural world; but we **MUST NOT** confuse the earth with the realms of the two unseen kingdoms: the earth is natural and the two kingdoms are supernatural and spiritual.

Tragically, the kingdom of the world—Satan's invisible kingdom—has so invaded the natural world of flesh and blood, the inhabitants of this earth and all their constructs of existence, that there is hardly any difference between the two. To most people, even believers, it is completely blurred even though the inhabitants of the earth have pledged their loyalty and allegiance, albeit largely unwittingly, to

the kingdom of Satan. Quite frankly, it is not hard to see the imprint of this satanic kingdom all over government, politics, religion (including Christianity), the economy, the world of entertainment, the education system, science, and so on, and on it goes. Every part of our natural life has been permeated and indelibly infused with the kingdom of this world. This is why in order to be a citizen of the kingdom of God, one must be born again. This is a must; being born again is the only way to escape the corruption of the natural world by this world's system.

From just this simple introduction to the Kingdom of God and the opposing kingdom of Satan, we can start to understand that this whole thing is about conquest—violent conquest. The enemy has invaded the earthly realms and has made a conquest of humanity through lies and deception. God, on the other hand, has invaded the souls of chosen men and women and has planned a counter attack, utilizing the truth to usurp the enemy's kingdom. It is an indirect attack and one that occurs through people. I want you to keep in mind however that Jesus, being the Lord God Almighty, in His absolute supremacy could simply snap His fingers and destroy the enemy and his kingdom. That is all it would take, a simple snap of His fingers. After all, nothing and no one is more powerful than Jesus; besides, Jesus created the enemy and something created is never more powerful than its creator. And there will be a day for this kind of sovereign disruption; but until that day we have been thrust into a war and its purpose is the conquest of people one soul at a time.

Being in the midst of this great battle sometimes gets overwhelming especially since the presence of the enemy seems to be everywhere. It's exhausting. But the good news is that the outcome of this war is has already decided: Jesus wins. Jesus

was victor, Jesus is victor, and Jesus will be victor. It is a foretold conclusion. That means we also win.

***Revelation 12:10***

Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

***Revelation 11:15***

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

At the sound of the "Last Trumpet," as we studied in ***Revelation***, the conquest of the kingdom of the world will be successful and the enemy will be stripped of his power, thrown down, conquered, and inevitably vanquished. What once belonged to Satan will belong to our Lord and His Christ and Jesus will reign forever and ever. This is another distinctive of the Kingdom of God in comparison to the kingdom of this world. The kingdom of this world is short-lived; soon the trumpet will blow and the Kingdom of God will prevail. The enemy will be made a prisoner—cast into the pits of darkness—and Christ will establish His rule on this earth for one-thousand years. Then at the end of those years, Satan will be set free from his prison of darkness and he will once again deceive the nations and gather them together

against Jesus and His Kingdom. But fire will devour them all and the devil will be thrown in the lake of fire and he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (see **Revelation 19:11-20:10**). That is quite a contrast. The kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Christ and Jesus will rule this kingdom forever and ever. This is a story of total conquest and Jesus wins. **Luke 1:33** makes it clear that the kingdom of Jesus will have no end. It will go on and on and on and on.

But the kingdom of Satan will have an end. The kingdom of this world will be destroyed. Satan, the beast, the False Prophet, and the armies of darkness, will all be punished eternally in the Lake of Fire. Torment will be their eternal lot. Their kingdom which for now seems so powerful, mighty, glorious, beautiful, and attractive to the lusts within our bodies, will be shaken and more than shaken, it will be decimated. But the Kingdom of God will never ever even be shaken much less damaged or destroyed.

### ***Hebrews 12:28-29***

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

This is another clear and irrefutable distinction between the kingdom of the world and the Kingdom of God; one is temporary and one is eternal. And keep in mind, His promises are true and every word will be upheld. As it says in **2 Corinthians 1:20**, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [in Jesus that

is]. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. So why waste your time clinging to what is dead and dying. It is not worth it. That side loses. Choose now to live on the side of those that win for all time.

Finally, I want you to remember something else we studied in *Revelation*, and that is Satan's authority on this earth is not a natural authority but a permitted authority. He has no right in and of himself to rule over humanity. He lied and deceived man and as a result the Lord God Almighty allowed him to have a time of temporary rule and reign on the earth. The Lord has His purposes for allowing this travesty, and those purposes have everything to do with us—the **Beloved**—and the Father seeking out a woman, a true and willing lover, for His Son. In contrast to Satan's rule, Jesus rule is not only natural it is a matter of fact; He is the Lord God Almighty. We are told in *Revelation 20* that Jesus is called Faithful and True, that His name is called the Word of God, and on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords. *Revelation 17:14* says that Jesus will overcome the assault of the devil and all earthly kingdoms because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Thus, Jesus is the real deal; and there is no other God. He is it!

Therefore, DO NOT BE TRICKED by the claims of the enemy to be anything to you but a source of rotten putrid destruction. Remember, Jesus, who always speaks the truth, says that the devil has come only to steal, kill, and destroy but He, Jesus, came in order that we might have life and have it abundantly (*John 10:10*). Anything the devil offers will only be temporary, for that is all he has control of; he can offer you nothing eternal. It is clearly declared that the form of this world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (*1 Corinthians*

**7:31; 1 John 2:17**). Let it go. Stop living in that delusional state thinking you just might get something from this world and it will be oh so wonderful; you will only be disappointed and you will miss out on the opportunity for abundant life.

It is time to take each lie the enemy has seduced you to believe and compare it to the truth and throw it away. It is time to say be gone! You have lived as a prison to these lies for far too long. And no matter how much you hope they will be true, they simply won't. The devil wants to hurt you. Get that in your head. Remember **1 Peter 5:8**, he prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. But resist him firm in your faith. You can do it. And if you stand firm, he will flee (**1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7**).

### ***John 8:46-47***

If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.

Please hear the words of the Lord and believe Him; He speaks the truth. The kingdom of this world can only steal, kill, and destroy. Any pleasures, any glory, any power, and any authority will ultimately take everything from you. But if you abide in the Kingdom of God, you will experience the fruition of every promise which God has ever made His people. And it will be glorious. His promises are true.

The Kingdom of God is separate and distinct from the kingdom of this world. Let this be your truth such that you live as if this is your truth.

Let's Pray