

The Kings

Last week we discussed the fact that the Kingdom of God is not of this world; it is entirely separate and distinct from the kingdom of the world. There is no overlap and there is no comingling of these two kingdoms and they exist in complete opposition to one another. The Kingdom of God is built on truth and its King is the truth. Whereas the kingdom of the world was acquired through the lie, is built on lies, and it exists through the lie. In fact, its king is a liar and the father of lies. This king does not stand in the truth for there is no truth in him. And if there is one thing that I wish we would let sink deep into our hearts, mind, and soul is that it is all a lie: everything with which the king of this world has tried to seduce us, tempt us, control us, and promise us is a lie because he is a liar. Let this truth rewrite all the scripts in your head about why you exist and what you hope to get out of this life. You need to take this seriously. This is not just a teaching series on the Kingdom of God; this teaching series has been directed by God in order to change the very foundations of how we live, think, and move on this earth.

Both of these kingdoms are spiritual kingdoms. They operate in the unseen world and they war over the realm of earth and humanity. I believe that if we could actually see the operatives from these two kingdoms, the angelic beings that fight on either side of this war, it would not be so difficult to understand the darkness, the hate, as well as the control and the manipulation that is associated with the lie. If we could only see clearly the extent to which the lie has infected and invaded every part of our earthly existence we would want to run so far away from this liar

and his kingdom. In fact, all of creation has been corrupted; and we know that even creation yearns and cries out for release from this bondage (***Romans 8:19***).

What is so incredible about these two unseen kingdoms is that they have the power to change into their image those who are part of their respective kingdoms and that is what we are going to talk about tonight—their image. This power to change people into the image of their king (either one) is a supernatural power that acts upon its subjects. We have studied this many times in ***Romans 12:1-2***. The subjects of these kingdoms cannot really fight this reality. It just happens. If you present yourself to the kingdom of this world, it will conform you into its image. This is a forced event; the pressure that will be exerted on your life by the king of the world will force this process and before long you will look like your king. But if you present yourself to the Kingdom of God, you will be transformed into the image of the One true King. The outcome is the same (you become like your king) but the process is different. The king of this world forces its subjects into its image by having invaded every aspect of our earthly existence and corrupting everything about their lives; but Jesus never forces anyone against their will. Rather, He will transform those who willfully present themselves to Him as a living sacrifice and He does this by replacing their corrupt and sullied nature. This is both a sudden event (when God gives a person His new nature) and an invasive event that happens over time as that new nature invades and permeates our bodies replacing that which is dead and dying with that which is new and will live on throughout eternity.

As I said before, the image of each kingdom is modeled after its king; thus, the subjects within each kingdom end up looking like their king—the one whom they serve. And do not think that just because you are a Christian or have called on the

name of God that you cannot be contorted into the image of father of this world. You can; and it is for this reason that we are learning what it means to live in the Kingdom of God instead of the kingdom of this world. We are therefore going to talk about each king in order that we might fully understand their respective character and nature and more fully grasp how distinct and separate these two kingdoms are. We will start with the king of this world who is Satan or the devil and then contrast him with Jesus, the King who sits upon the throne ruling the Kingdom of God. And as we are going through these descriptions of each king I want you to keep in mind that these descriptions provide the pattern after which the people of their respective kingdoms are imaged—the pattern after which you will be imaged.

The king over the kingdom of this world

Just to remind you, the king, prince, and ruler of this world is the devil (***John 12:31, 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4***) who is also known as Satan (***Revelation 12:9***).

Satan is an adversary; the one who always pits himself against those who are chosen by God (***1 Peter 5:8***).

Satan is a liar and a deceiver (***Genesis 3:13, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:14*** and ***Revelation 20:2; 2 John 7***). Satan deceives the whole world (***Revelation 12:9; 20:8, 10***). He is a poser and in his deceptive ways he tries to make us believe he is an angel of light (***2 Corinthians 11:14***). He even fills the hearts of people with the gall to lie to the Holy Spirit (***Acts 5:3***).

Satan is an accuser and before God he brings accusation against people in order that he might bring condemnation and reproach into their lives (***Zechariah 3:1; Job 1-21; 1 Timothy 3:6-7***).

Satan is a tempter and tempts people to rely on their own resources instead of the strength and capability which God desires to provide (***1 Chronicles 21; Matthew 4:1-10***).

Satan is a schemer and schemes against people to hurt them (***2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11***).

Satan is a stumbling block and he induces people to set their mind not on God's interest but on man's interests and he does this in order to sift them like wheat and tear them apart (***Matthew 16:23; Luke 22:31; 1 Corinthians 7:5***). As a stumbling block, Satan also hinders people from following the Lord's ways (***1 Thessalonians 2:18***).

Satan is a thief and he takes away the Word of God which has been sown in the hearts of people before it has the chance to take root (***Mark 4:15; Luke 18:12; John 10:10***).

Satan is a murderer and a killer (***John 8:44; John 10:10***).

Satan is a betrayer of friends (***John 13:2***).

Satan is fraudulent, full of all deceit, and an enemy of all righteousness (***Acts 13:10***).

Satan is lord over the domain of darkness (***Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13***).

Satan holds people in his snare captive to do his will (**2 Timothy 2:26**). Satan enslaves people using the fear of death, for he has the power of death in his hands (**Hebrews 2:14-15**).

Satan is wrathful (**Revelation 12:12**) and deals treacherously (**Judges 9:23**).

Satan is a defiler for he sows tares (or weeds) in the midst of wheat—the worthless in the midst of that which has great value (**Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43**).

Satan is a hater and he brings hatred between people (**1 John 2:9-11**).

Satan is a hunter of the **Beloved** and he prowls like a lion seeking someone to devour (**1 Peter 5:8**).

Satan physically afflicts people (**Job 1-2; Luke 13:16; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Timothy 1:20**); he oppresses people (**Acts 10:38**); he terrorizes them and torments them (**1 Samuel 14:15-16**) such that they act like mad men, raving with hatred, violence, and murder (**1 Samuel 18:10-11, 19:9-10; Acts 19:15-16**).

Satan causes people to suffer great diseases and physical abnormalities (**Mark 9:17-25; Luke 9:39, 13:11**).

To summarize, the king of this world is an Adversary; Liar; Deceiver; Poser; Accuser; Tempter, Schemer; Stumbling Block; Hinderer; Thief; Murderer; Killer; Betrayer; Fraudulent; Enemy of Righteousness; Lord of Darkness; Captor and Slave Holder; Wrathful; Treacherous; Defiler; Hater; Hunter; Devourer; Afflicter; Oppressor; Terrorist; Tormentor; and Bringer of Physical Sickness.

This is who the devil is and all he does—all his actions—fall in line with his character and nature which is why all his deeds of evil and darkness are worthless

(Ephesians 5:11). He is a liar, he is one who always opposes God and the people of God, and he is a destroyer. Is this the one you want to conform you into his image? Is this the one whom you want to call your Father? Far too many in the realm of Christianity look more like this king than they would want to admit. The situation today is not unlike the situation in Jesus' day when He told the religious leaders:

John 8:43-44

Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.

Be careful, Satan's activity comes with powers, signs, false wonders, and all the deception of wickedness (**2 Thessalonians 2:9; Acts 16:16-18**) which is why those who walk in his darkness cannot even see where they are going (**John 12:35**). The devil's followers practice sin, it is their lifestyle (**1 John 3:8**), they are evil, imposters, they deceive as they are deceived, they are rebellious, empty talkers, and their lives proceed from bad to worse (**2 Timothy 3:13-14; 1 Timothy 1:10**).

I want to read a passage from **Jeremiah** that speaks of this process whereby people, even the people chosen of God, get conformed into the image of the devil. It is sad, horrific, but tragically what we see happening all around us every single day. And keep in mind as we read this passage, it is not addressing heathens and unbelievers, it is addressing the lives and choices of the people of God.

Jeremiah 9:1-6

Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the desert a wayfarers' lodging place; that I might leave my people and go from them! For all of them are adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. They bend their tongue like their bow; lies and not truth prevail in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me, declares the Lord. Let everyone be on guard against his neighbor, and do not trust any brother; because every brother deals craftily, and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer. Everyone deceives his neighbor and does not speak the truth, they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves committing iniquity. Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me, declares the Lord.

This powerfully captures the work of the devil to conform people into his image. And it is clear that people—even the people of God—are caught, enslaved, perverted, inverted, contorted, and conformed into the image of the devil and they forsake the Kingdom of God for the kingdom of this world. They have a master, they have a father, and he is the devil.

Before we move on and explain the character and nature of the Kingdom of God, I want to remind you that there is no middle ground. Jesus said in ***Luke 11:23***: “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.” This hard line is reinforced in ***Matthew 12:30***; ***Luke 9:50***, and ***Revelation 3:15-16***. And this demarcation will make sense when you see that the King over the Kingdom

of God is so diametrically opposed to the king of the world. Therefore, do not be deceived. The character and nature of the King who rules the Kingdom of God has no part with the king over the kingdom of the world; no part.

The King over the Kingdom of God

First of all, God is the Lord (*Psalm 144:15*) and there is no one else (*1 Kings 8:60*); the Lord is His name (*Exodus 15:3; Hosea 12:5*), and the Lord is one (*Deuteronomy 6:4*).

God is great and exalted (*Psalm 135:5, 138:6*).

The Lord God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality (*Deuteronomy 10:17-18; Daniel 2:47*). He is a great God, a great King above all gods (*Psalm 95:3*). He is the true God (*Jeremiah 10:10*).

God is Spirit (*John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 3:17*).

God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all (*Micah 7:8; 1 John 1:5-6; Colossians 1:13*).

God is love (*1 John 4:8, 16*).

God is peace (*Judges 6:24*).

The Lord is a God of knowledge (*1 Samuel 2:3*); and Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (*1 Corinthians 1:24*).

God is faithful (*1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:3*).

God is holy (*1 Peter 1:15-16; Leviticus 11:44, 19:2*).

God is upright (***Psalm 92:15***).

God is good; in fact, only God is good (***Luke 18:19; Matthew 19:17; Nahum 1:7; Jeremiah 33:11; Psalm 34:8, 100:5, 106:1, 118:1, 118:29, 145:9, 136:1, 135:3; Ezra 3:11; 1 Chronicles 16:34; 2 Chronicles 5:13, 7:3***).

God is righteous (***Exodus 9:27; 2 Chronicles 12:6; Lamentation 1:8; Daniel 9:4; Zephaniah 3:5***); He loves righteousness (***Psalm 11:7***); in fact, righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne (***Psalm 97:2***). As such, God does not show partiality (***Acts 10:34***). Nevertheless, God is the one who justifies (***Romans 8:33***).

God is our salvation, our strength, our light, our song, and the defense of our lives (***Exodus 15:2; Isaiah 12:2; 49:5; Psalm 27:1***).

God is the great shepherd (***Psalm 23:1; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4***).

The Lord is the rock, a strong fortress, and the deliverer. He is a dwelling place (***Deuteronomy 33:27; 2 Samuel 22:2, 33; Psalm 59:9, 17***), a refuge, and our strength (***Psalm 46:1, 62:8***).

God is a helper, the sustainer of our soul, and the strength of our heart (***Psalm 54:4; Hebrews 13:6; Psalm 73:26; Habakkuk 3:19***). He is our portion (***Psalm 119:57; Lamentations 3:24***). He is our keeper and the shade on our right hand (***Psalm 121:5***).

God is compassionate: gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and truth (***Deuteronomy 4:31; Exodus 34:6; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Nehemiah 9:31; Psalm 103:8, 111:14, 116:5; Jonah 4:2***).

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit (***Psalm 34:18***). God is a god of deliverances (***Psalm 68:20***); and God is for us (***Psalm 56:9***).

God is a consuming fire (***Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29***) and he will one day consume the kingdom of this world for He is the king of all the earth (***Revelation 11:15; Psalm 47:7***).

The Lord is our judge, our lawgiver, and our king (***Isaiah 33:2***). And God is not unjust (***Hebrews 6:10***) for He is a righteous judge (***Psalm 7:11***)—a Judge who puts down one and exalts another (***Psalm 75:7***). He is a god of justice (***Isaiah 30:18***).

God does not lie (***Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2***).

God is a sun and a shield (***Psalm 84:11***); God is mighty (***Job 36:5***); and God is exalted in power (***Job 36:22***).

God is greater than man (***Job 33:12***) and the ruler over the realm mankind (***Daniel 5:21***). He is high above all nations (***Psalm 113:4***) and He is the King forever and ever (***Psalm 10:16***).

He is the Lord of hosts (of all the angelic beings) (***Hosea 12:5***) and He is called the Lord of Heaven's armies (***Haggai 1:2***), which is a phrase which is used 282 times in the Bible so I won't quote you the whole list.

God is a jealous God (***Deuteronomy 4:24***) and He is good to those who wait for Him (***Lamentation 3:25***).

God is a warrior (***Exodus 15:3***), a great champion (***Jeremiah 20:11***), and He is an avenging and wrathful God who takes vengeance on his adversaries and reserves

wrath for His enemies; but God is also slow to anger and great in power (***Nahum 1:2-3; Numbers 14:18***). Yet He always gives just punishment (***Jeremiah 51:56***).

God is not a God of confusion (***1 Corinthians 14:33***).

God is our banner (***Exodus 17:15***) and He is near to all who call upon Him (***Psalms 145:18***) but the Lord is far from the wicked (***Proverbs 15:29***).

God is the maker of all things and everyone (***Proverbs 22:2; Jeremiah 33:2; Colossians 1:16***) and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore (***Psalms 16:11***).

God is healer (***Exodus 15:26***); God is the one who sanctifies us (***Exodus 31:13***); God is our provider (***Genesis 22:14***); and God is our righteousness (***Jeremiah 23:6***).

All that He does is just and good and reveals His glory and majesty (***Psalms 111:3, 7***). He is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds (***Psalms 145:17***).

That is the One true King—my King. I am not even sure I can summarize all that is said about God. He is simply too great and exceedingly glorious without compare. ***Psalms 113:3-5*** says, “From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high?” Clearly no one, especially the king of this world.

I want to quickly go through a few scriptures that contrast those who have been conformed by the devil and those who have been transformed by Jesus. The distinction in the children of each king is as obvious and delineated as is the kings themselves.

Proverbs 4:19: the way of the wicked is like total darkness. They have no idea what they are stumbling over.

Ephesians 5:8-10: for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth).

Psalm 107:10-11: Some sat in darkness and deepest gloom, imprisoned in iron chains of misery. They rebelled against the words of God, scorning the counsel of the Most High.

Psalm 107:13-16: "Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he broke down their prison gates of bronze; he cut apart their bars of iron.

Psalm 112:3: Light shines in the darkness for the godly. They are generous, compassionate, and righteous.

Proverbs 2:12-15: Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths. They take pleasure in doing wrong, and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil. Their actions are crooked, and their ways are wrong.

Isaiah 5:20: What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.

1 John 3:10: By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

As the Lord says in *Isaiah 1:18*, let us reason together. Can there be any more of a stark difference between the two kings or between their two subjects? We need to believe this to be true; we need to settle on this manner because whether we like it or not we are being either conformed into the image of this world in the character and nature of the devil or transformed into the image of Christ. One way or another it is happening; therefore, we must no longer be deceived into living for the kingdom of this world that is ruled by such a treacherous and loathsome being. Besides, in reality, this so called king is nothing more than a pawn who can only do what our Lord God Almighty allows Him to do. That is it. He has nothing on our God. As we discussed last week, the devil's rule is a permitted rule and not a natural rule. We have to wake up to these truths and let them be our truth. We must be willing to discard all our attachments and all our affections for this darkened kingdom and exchange it all for the kingdom of light because there is no one like our King. This poser, this angel of light may glow in the night, but he only brings darkness to our soul. There is a song I heard by Casting Crowns and I love what they say about God. The first verse, bridge, and chorus goes like this:

Who am I that the Lord of all the earth would care to know my name, would care to feel my hurt? Who am I that the bright and morning star would choose to light the way for my ever wandering heart. Not because of who I am. *Not because of what You've done*. Not because of what I've done, **but because of who You are**. I am a flower quickly fading, here today and gone tomorrow. A wave tossed in the ocean, a vapor in the wind. Still You hear me when I'm

calling; Lord, you catch me when I'm falling. And you've told me who I am: I am yours, I am Yours.

Everything we have is because of who our God is; in fact, what He does and what He has done is merely an expression of who He is. I want to encourage you to study these scriptures both about our God and about the liar to whom we have for far too long listened. Study it and let it transform your mind such that you are willing to choose, honor, worship, follow, serve, love, and give yourself only to the one who is great and good and above all.

In closing, I want to make a declaration for myself, for my family, and for this body, just like Joshua did when the people of Israel were ready to enter the Promised Land.

Joshua 24:14-15

So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live?

But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.

Let's Pray