

**The Character of the King's Kingdom**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 18:33-37**  
**November 8, 2015**

Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 18. We last week covered the large passage, John 18:28-19:16, and in that passage we see the, we titled it 'The Trial of the King'. We looked at the unfolding drama there in those dramas in two weeks, and we saw that, in a sense, as the trial is put forth, you really have Jesus versus His accusers. We looked at two weeks ago, the Jews, and then last week we looked at Jesus versus the judge, that is Pilate, and we saw that in the trial of the King, the King is actually the one trying, ironically, the people, His accusers, and His judge.

But I want to, though we've covered the drama as a whole, and we'll be ready to move on to Verse 17, I want to go back though to a key theme in the passage that we haven't had time to deal with. So the title of today's message is, and we said that last time was 'The Trial of the King', today is 'The Character of the King's Kingdom'. A key theme that is introduced in this drama, this unfolding of the events that happened the day our Savior was crucified, is in His discussion with Pilate in Verses 33-37. That is our focus this morning. We are actually going to just focus on John 18:33-37, and probably look at it again next week, unfolding the character of the King's Kingdom. Because as Jesus deals with Pilate, He reveals to us something of the glory of His Kingdom, and the surprising power, and glory, and majesty of His Kingdom. So let's read Verses 33-37, John 18.

*John 18:33-37 ~ Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" 35 Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" 36 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." 37 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."*

Let's pray together.



*Our Father, as we bow before Your word, we acknowledge our dependence upon You. Father, we need You to open our eyes, that we might see, open our ears that we might hear, open our hearts that we might repent and believe. Father, we pray that You would have Your way, through Your word, in each heart, and each life. And we pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.*

‘The Character of the King’s Kingdom’. We are going to be looking at a number of points. Basically I see five points that we are going to look at over two weeks, here that I want to talk about, that we see, and that we need to really understand what Jesus is saying about His Kingdom. The Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom of God, is one of the most important themes in all of Scripture, and it is one that often, as many important things in life this is true of, that sometimes the things that are most important we take for granted, and then we don’t really even know how to describe it that well. If someone says, “What is the Kingdom of God? What does that mean?” That is something that we as Christians really ought to understand because it is one of the essential teachings of the Bible. One of the most important, one of the most fundamental aspects of God’s revelation, is the concept of the Kingdom of God. It is like the binding of the Bible, it holds it all together. It is one of those teachings like that, very much like a covenant. It is a teaching that holds the whole of Scripture together. This idea that we need a king, we need God to be our King, and that the history of salvation is basically the history of Genesis to Revelation is God was our King in Eden. There was a rebellion, and because of that rebellion, we are under the domain of darkness, we are enslaved, we are in bondage, we need to be delivered.

The Old Testament is the prophecy that there is a coming King, there is a deliverer who is coming. This is the drumbeat, and the refrain throughout the Old Testament, the Messiah is coming, the Messiah, that Hebrew word means ‘*anointed one*’, and the anointed offices were the prophet, the priest, and the king. So the Messiah will be the King, He is also going to be the prophet, He is also going to be the priest. But the glorious thing is He is going to be the King, He is going to break the reign of evil in our lives, and in this world. So that refrain gets to fever pitch in the prophets, and then when John the Baptist comes on the scene preaching, what does he preach? What is the content of his message? Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, the Kingdom of God is here.

We read earlier, what was Jesus preaching? In fact, that passage we read in Matthew 4, when you read it in context, the fuller context, it says in Chapter 4, “Once Jesus learned that John had been imprisoned, his ministry is over.” It says in Verse 17 of Matthew 4:

***Matthew 4:17 ~ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”***

His message was the Kingdom of Heaven. So we want to see how it unfolds, and this is what is happening in John 18. Jesus now is in a sense to Pilate, and through this encounter, preaching to us the glory of His Kingdom, and His Kingdom is very different from how we expect. It is much more wonderful than what we would expect.

Now the points I want to consider this morning, *The Origin of His Kingdom*, that is our first point. Secondly, *The Importance of His Kingdom*. And thirdly, *The Need for His Kingdom*. The origin, the importance, and the need.

1) The Origin of His Kingdom:

Now, *The Origin of His Kingdom*, Verse 36:

***John 18:36 ~ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world.***

And the word ‘*kingdom*’ is obviously, it is repeated three times in that verse.

***John 18:36 ~ “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.”***

So three times He mentions the Kingdom, and each time He mentions the Kingdom He basically says, “It’s not of this world.” One time He says, “If it were of this world...” but of course it is not, so His emphasis is, “My Kingdom, the origin of My Kingdom is not of this cosmos,” is the Greek word here for world. “It is not of this world order.” The origin of the Kingdom is from outside. The origin of the Kingdom is from Heaven. So this tells us something about the Kingdom. It is ultimately, it is spiritual. And what we see in the world view that the Bible presents to us, which is the correct world view, of course, because this is God’s word, is that in reality though, we see the physical world, we don’t see the spiritual world. There really are two distinct, yet intimately related realms of reality. There is the physical world that we see with our eyes, and there is the spiritual world, the heavens. When you read the New Testament, you see this again and again, and just one example, Colossians 1:15, when the apostle Paul is describing the glory of Christ, and having created everything.

***Colossians 1:15 ~ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.***

What does he mean by ‘*firstborn*’? What he means is through whom everything was birthed, or born, because he explains it in Verse 16. Listen to Verse 16, Colossians 1:16.

***Colossians 1:16 ~ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth,...***

Both in that realm and this realm. You could think he is just talking about outer space or whatever, the heavens in that sense. No, he’s not, he’s talking about the spiritual realm, because look what he says.

***Colossians 1:16 ~ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,...***

You see? He created everything that is visible, and He created everything that is invisible, the spiritual realm. Then he goes on to explain, what’s in the invisible realm?

***Colossians 1:16 ~ ...whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.***

He is talking about the spiritual realm where the angels dwell, spiritual realities that are every bit as real as what we see with our eyes, and touch with our hands. So Jesus is saying then that, “My Kingdom is ultimately rooted in the spiritual realm. It is from that realm and that is the source, the origin. It is from Heaven.” Now it is not just heavenly, it has impact on the physical. “That’s why I came into the world. I came into the world to bring my heavenly Kingdom here.” So both the spiritual and the physical are of concern to God. Now having said that, the first two points are going to be kind of quick. The third point is where we are going to camp out, just to kind of prepare you. We are going to get through the first and second points relatively quickly. To me, very quickly. You may think, “That could have been quicker.”

## 2) The Importance of His Kingdom:

The second point is *The Importance of His Kingdom. The Origin of His Kingdom*, now secondly, *The Importance of His Kingdom*. This idea of, this theme that Jesus brings up here, is so important in the New Testament. I mentioned a moment ago that you can, actually look back with me at Matthew 4, the passage we looked at earlier, I want to just show you that, what I started to share with you earlier. We are told in Matthew 4:12:

***Matthew 4:12 ~ Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee;***

Now this is after His baptism by John. This is after the temptation in the wilderness. He hears John has been taken into custody and He knows now, it is the new phase in his ministry. He is to begin his preaching ministry. So it says in Verse 13:

***Matthew 4:13-14 ~ and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This was to fulfill...***

And he quotes from the Old Testament, from Isaiah 9, and then He says in Verse 17:

***Matthew 4:17 ~ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."***

Then Verse 23, we read earlier:

***Matthew 4:23 ~ Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues...***

And what was He doing? What was His message? He was proclaiming the Gospel, the good news of the Kingdom, that the Kingdom of God is here, that the Kingdom of Heaven is how Matthew phrases it. Thirty-four times he uses that phrase, 'Kingdom of Heaven'. It is interesting, scholars have wondered about why he says Kingdom of Heaven, and the clear consensus is Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience, exclusively Jewish audience, and he deliberately did not use the name of God any more than he had to. So he uses 'Heaven' in a sense of metonymy, one word to refer for something else that is related. He says 'Heaven' when he means

'God'. The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven is the same thing, but 34 times in his Gospel he uses the phrase '*Kingdom of Heaven*'. Another 65 times in the New Testament you will find the phrase '*Kingdom of God*'. And when you add them all up, other references to Kingdom we have in John, you have well over 100 uses of the phrase the '*Kingdom of God*', or the '*Kingdom of Heaven*' in the New Testament. It is a key theme.

You see it also, Mark summarizes Jesus' Gospel the same way, the content of His preaching. Now basically, this is not all Jesus said. It wasn't that Jesus said, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. That's all I've got to say. Sermon over." Wouldn't you like to go to that church? You could beat even the Methodists to lunch. It wasn't in my notes, you know, stuff comes out. To summarize the essential theme, and content of His preaching, that is what he was saying. To summarize it in a sentence, He was saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. That is My message," so that all that He said added up to that main thrust. That is how Matthew described it. Mark describes it the same way in Verses 14-15 of Mark 1.

***Mark 1:14-15 ~ Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."***

Luke does the same thing, they summarize the preaching ministries of Jesus the same way. Luke 4 and Verse 43, it says in Verse 42:

***Luke 4:42-43 ~ When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. 43 But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."***

What was Jesus sent to do? To preach the Kingdom of God. When you look at the preaching of the apostles after, well, look at Acts because in Acts 1, turn with me to a few verses in Acts we'll look at. This is referring to what Jesus was talking about after His resurrection. Verse 3, talking about His apostles.

***Acts 1:3 ~ To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.***

It summarized all that He was teaching about in those 40 days. He was talking about the Kingdom of God, do you see that? They were good listeners, they got the message because, as we see in Acts 8:12, Luke, the author of Acts, summarizes for us the preaching of one of the disciples. They believed Philip, what was he doing? When Philip preaches, what was he preaching?

***Acts 8:12 ~ But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,...***

Paul's preaching can be summarized that way. Turn to Acts 19:8. When Paul enters the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus, Verse 8:

***Acts 19:8 ~ And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.***

A three-month series on the Kingdom of God. That is a little more than what that little brief sermon apparently that John the Baptist preached. Anyway, I thought that was a little funnier, but thank you Sally. So you see it again at the end of Luke in a powerful way. The last verse of Luke's recounting of the Acts of the Apostles. In Verse 30-31 he tells us, the apostle Paul, he's now arrested in Rome. He is there. What is he doing?

***Acts 28:30-31 ~ And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.***

So this concept of the Kingdom of God is one we need to have a clear grasp of because it is at the heart of the message that we should be sharing. The Kingdom of God, it is essential, it is important. Now that is the second point, well let me actually, it is 100 times in the New Testament, I have a little bit more to that second point before we move on. It is a phrase though that the Kingdom of God, those three words, are not found together in that way in the Old Testament. I was sharing with you, I think the Old Testament is all about the Kingdom of God, but the phrase 'Kingdom of God' does not occur in the Old Testament, but it is that which is driving the entire thing. It is kind of like when people say the word 'Trinity' is not in the Bible. The word 'Trinity' that describes that God is three persons, yet He is one in essence. That word is not found in the Bible, but the doctrine is taught everywhere, it is pervasive. I think in the way it is kind of like,

you know you've heard the phrase '*Fish don't know they are wet*' so you don't have to talk about, "How wet are you?" to a fish. He is already wet, he doesn't know what it's like to not be wet. In some sense, the Kingdom of God is like that in the Old Testament, it is everywhere because it is what is driving the flow.

But let me just share a few things with you to help you see this in the development of the Old Testament. The book of Judges, you remember that after God delivers them from Egyptian bondage, the Exodus, Ted mentioned it in Sunday morning Bible study. The study has been concerning the archaeological evidence for the Exodus, the reality that there were Hebrew people delivered from, and we can see it in the archaeology itself, confirming the Bible. Good archaeology and good science always confirm the Bible because the Bible is true. But anyway, they are delivered from Egyptian bondage, they are taken into the land of Canaan by the Lord, and they are to dwell with God, in God's presence in the land of Canaan. God is teaching us about how is it that sinners come to dwell with a holy God? And the way He deals with the people of Israel in the Old Testament, in a sense, it is an object lesson, it is an ongoing, extended, object lesson. This is what must happen to a sinner to come to live with a holy God. Once we, you know, Adam and Eve sinned, we have been separated from God, and the Scripture says our sins separate us from Him. So the unfolding of Scripture is the unfolding of the way back to God, the way back to experiencing fellowship with Him, to experiencing His love, His kindness, to have a right relationship with Him. And the Old Testament is teaching us that, and much of it in picture form because God knows that a picture is worth a thousand words sometimes, and we are pretty slow and dumb, and we need it clearly spelled out.

### 3) The Importance of His Kingdom:

So one of the things that He does for us, is He shows us, puts the people in the land, and you remember in the book of Judges, that basically the story of the judges, that is where you meet Samson, you meet Gideon, you meet Deborah, there are a number of judges that God raises up to deliver the people. Basically, the idea is the people keep on sinning, they turn away from God, and go after idols, they are living ungodly lives, and God then allows them to experience hardship. The nations around them oppress them, the Midianites, the Philistines, the nations around them oppress them and then God raises up a judge to deliver them. The first half of the book, or the first 16 chapters, that is basically the theme—sin, judgement of God, repentance, God raises up a judge, delivers them. They return to God, then they sin, God sends judgement, etc. Just like that. But then in Chapter



17-21, the last five chapters of the book, basically this is the theme—we need a king. That is the theme. Chapter 17:6, this important phrase, and it says:

***Judges 17:6 ~ In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.***

Listen to this, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. And what you have, that refrain in 18:1:

***Judges 18:1 ~ In those days there was no king of Israel;...***

Chapter 19:1:

***Judges 19:1 ~ Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel,...***

Chapter 21:25, the last verse in the book of Judges:

***Judges 21:25 ~ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.***

Between that 17:6 and 21:25 is basically, is such a heinous picture of how much the people of God can devolve spiritually. I mean, it is not PG-13 even. The stuff that is there, if you are reading through your Bible with your little one, you have to be careful about those passages because of how bad things get spiritually. The people who are supposed to belong to God, and one of the sections there becomes so consumed with sexual sin that they look exactly like Sodom in Genesis, when God destroyed the world. Exactly the same, eerily the same when you read it, and what is the message? And that is just one example. I mean, there was all kinds of bizarre behavior going on. What is the message? When there is no king, this is what happens, and we need a king.

And then Samuel, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, those two books are given to us to basically say, “We need a king like David. We don’t need a king like Saul, we need a king like David. That is what we need to be the people God wants us to be. And then David is not perfect though, so we need the son of David.” 2 Samuel 7:16, God promises, “I will send, I will make a covenant with your son, and I will put him on my throne, an everlasting throne.” He is picturing Christ and the book of Kings basically shows us we need a king, but we need a king like David, but better than David. And then the prophets pick up the refrain, and it is, “We need

God's King. We need the King God is going to send," and so that is the longing, and the expectation of the people. "Lord, send to us the King." Now they don't fully understand how much they need a king because they think they need a king to deliver them from the bondage of the political things that are going on. They think they needed a king that will deal with all of the injustice, and wickedness that is visible. But what Jesus is coming to do is to fix that eventually, but He has to first of all go to the heart of the problem. Every problem you and I have that is external in our lives is rooted in our hearts, in the unseen, in the spiritual, in the soul, and Jesus comes to be that King. So the importance of the Kingdom is spelled out. I've just kind of transitioned into the third point, *The Need for His Kingdom*, and this is where we are going to spend the rest of our time.

Now there are three sub-points under this third point. I told you we were going to be here awhile, so there are three sub-points, but to help you follow *The Need for His Kingdom*, the first sub-point is *How Things Really Are*. The second sub-point is *How Things Got This Way*. And the third sub-point is *How Can You Be Free? How Can We Be Free?*

#### A) How Things Really Are:

One of the things about it, we don't see the need for the Kingdom. We don't really understand it. We, if you are an unbeliever, and you haven't come to Christ yet, you don't see the need for a king. And even as Christians, I think we struggle continually, not realizing how much we need His Kingship, and Lordship, every moment of every day. We forget, because we don't see how things really are. If we saw how things really are, we would see that our greatest need is a king, a king to address the needs of our hearts, and Jesus has been explaining this throughout the Gospel of John. This is why at this point it picks up so many themes he has been dealing with earlier in the Gospel. Turn with me back from John 18 to John 8. Why do we need a king? Because of the way things really are. In fact, Verse 31, Jesus is saying to those Jews:

***John 8:31-32 ~ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."***

And they show how they don't have a clue of how much they need a king. He is saying, "What you need is to be set free. You need the King that God is sending, whom I am, to set you free," and they say, "Hey, we are Abraham's descendants," Verse 33:

***John 8:33 ~ They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?”***

That is such a ridiculous statement on their part. They are under the bondage of Rome, and here it is like them waving their flags saying, “Let freedom ring. We are everything!” and then there is a Roman soldier right over there. They don’t have a clue, but more than that, they have no clue about their spiritual slavery.

***John 8:34 ~ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.***

“The reality is that you are slaves,” He is saying to the Jewish people. These were religious people who had the Torah, had the word of God. He is saying, “Your biggest problem is that you are slaves. You need to be set free.” They said, “We’re not slaves.” If religious people felt that way, how much more do irreligious people feel that they are slaves? They have no idea they are slaves, they think they are free. But the reality is, the Bible teaches very clearly again and again that the greatest problem that man has, a sinner has, is he is enslaved. As much as we talk about freedom, and celebrate like the beauty of America, and freedom, and all that, the reality is spiritually every single person born into this sin-sick world is a slave. That is what the Bible teaches. That is what John has been explaining, Jesus has been explaining again throughout John. They are a slave to Satan. He goes on to explain, in Verse 44, after He has told them, “Listen, I’ve been telling you the truth and you want to kill Me.” He looks in their hearts to say, “You have murderous intent, you want to kill Me because I’m telling you the truth.” And in Verse 44, He explains, “Why you want to kill Me,” to these Jews around Him. He says:

***John 8:44 ~ 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.***

“The reason you want to kill Me is because you are of your father.” He is saying, “You’re just like your dad,” and the reality is, the Bible teaches that every single person on the face of the earth’s spiritual father is Satan. That is not good news, is it? It is bad news, but it is reality, and it is the preface to the good news that you can be delivered from the slavery to Satan by the good news of the coming King, Jesus Christ. It is what the Bible teaches everywhere, and in John, Jesus uses a

phrase three times. He was speaking of Satan, He calls him, listen to what He says about this is who Satan is, “He is the ruler of this world.” Chapter 12, Verse 31, He says that.

***John 12:31 ~ Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.***

He says, “The place of Satan is very powerful. He is the king of this world.” He says the same thing in Chapter 14, Verse 30.

***John 14:30 ~ I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming,...***

He says the same thing in Chapter 16, Verse 11.

***John 16:11 ~ and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.***

Satan is the ruler of this world. 2 Corinthians 4:4, the apostle Paul says that he is the god of this age. That though people think, we thought we were free, before we were saved. I didn't think I was, I would have never said I was following Satan. No, but the Bible says that I am because I was begotten by the same kind of heart that He has. And essentially, his heart is this. I am moving on to the second sub-point. The second sub-point is *How Things Got This Way*. There will be a little bit of overlap because I think that I needed to go here for a moment.

## B) How Things Got This Way:

*How Things Are*, everybody who does not know Jesus Christ is the slave of the devil. *How Things Got This Way*, well, when you look at, and I'm going to explain to you some passages. Turn with me to Ezekiel 28 and I'm going to tell you what is kind of going on here. This is the prophecy of Ezekiel, and he is taking up oracles. The Lord is basically telling him, “Speak to different countries and to different rulers,” and in Chapter 28, the Lord tells him, gives him a word to speak to a man, the King of Tyre. This is a literal man who lived in history, the King of Tyre. Tyre was a glorious city there in the Mediterranean, on the Mediterranean, into the Mediterranean actually, and God calls him to speak a word of prophetic judgement to this man. Look what he says in Verse 2:

*Ezekiel 28:2 ~*

*‘Thus says the Lord GOD,  
“Because your heart is lifted up  
And you have said, ‘I am a god,  
I sit in the seat of gods  
In the heart of the seas’;  
Yet you are a man and not God,  
Although you make your heart like the heart of God—*

This man was like many of the kings of that day, he claimed to be God, and so God says, “Speak to him and tell him, ‘You are not God.’” Now what is interesting is that in Verse 11, that he continues talking to the King of Tyre, and in Verse 11, something happens. It says:

*Ezekiel 28:11 ~ Again the word of the LORD came to me...*

Like a second word, and he is looking at the King of Tyre, and then suddenly he starts talking to someone in the spiritual realm, behind the King of Tyre. Listen for what He says:

*Ezekiel 28:12 ~ ... “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,...*

You are still looking at the King of Tyre, but something has happened. What does He say?

*Ezekiel 28:13 ~ “You were in Eden, the garden of God;...*

The King of Tyre was never in Eden, the garden of God.

*Ezekiel 28:13 ~*

*...The ruby, the topaz and the diamond;  
The beryl, the onyx and the jasper;  
The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald;  
And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets,  
Was in you.*

“Look how glorious you were!”

*Ezekiel 28:13-14 ~*

*On the day that you were created*

*They were prepared.*

*14 “You were the anointed cherub who covers,*

*And I placed you there.*

*You were on the holy mountain of God;*

*You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.*

What is happening? He is talking to Satan, who was formerly known as Lucifer, and was the greatest created angel. You see, He was looking at the King of Tyre, and He was saying, “You want to be like God. You think you are God,” and now He says, “Speak another word to him,” and this time what has happened is He is speaking to the spiritual agent behind the King of Tyre. He is speaking to the King of Tyre’s true master, Satan. He goes on down in Verse 17:

*Ezekiel 28:17 ~ “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;*

In Verse 16 He had said:

*Ezekiel 28:16 ~*

*You were internally filled with violence,*

*And you sinned;*

*Therefore I have cast you as profane*

*From the mountain of God.*

Now you compare this to Isaiah 14, which we won’t bother to look at right now. Just look at it yourself. The same thing happens. Isaiah is talking to the King of Babylon, and then I think He is also talking to the one behind the King of Babylon, Satan, and He says, “You said in your heart, I will be like the most high.” Why did Lucifer fall? Because he was not content in his role as the highest created being. He wanted to be like God. Now turn with me to Genesis 3. God had given one command. I love that, when you think about this. You think about the world God created—trees all over, wonderful, perfect world. Everything is in absolute pristine condition.

I mean, thinking about fruit, it’s almost like when you get fruit, you are sort of like rolling the dice. You have no idea if it is going to be good or not, no matter how good it looks. You take that apple, and you eat it, and you’re like, “Oh man,” and

you wish you could take it back. There is a bite out of it, but it is no good. “I paid for this. I bought it today. It is no good.” That is just the way it is, but anyway, sometimes you get an apple and it is fantastic, and that is wonderful, right? Well, in the Garden of Eden, there was never a time where somebody took a bite and said, “Ah, that is not that good. It is not ripe.” Everything was perfect. Everything was wonderful. And the only thing that God had said you can’t have is, He had said, “There is one tree in the garden. Of all the trees there is one tree,” and if you think about it spiritually, in a sense, He put a fence that limited man, but think about this.

Try to mentally picture what the fence looked like. We think, this is how we think now, this is what unbelievers think, that if they follow God they will be surrounded by fences all of the time. “I can’t go here. I can’t go here. I can’t go here,” like God is holding out on us. But what is the heart of God? What did He do in the Garden of Eden? Everything was wide open to them except one little area, that is the heart of the God of the Bible. The problem is, now that sin has entered the world, we do need lots of other fences because we are such foolish sinners. But it wasn’t always that way, and you can know that the heart of the God, who is now putting up the fences, like we read from Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments, He put up those fences because He is good, and He knows what is best, and He loves us.

So anyway, there is the one tree they can’t eat from. God has said, “The day you eat of it, you will die.” The serpent comes and says in Verse 4, here is Satan, after his own rebellion, he comes to seek followers. He says in Verse 4, ... ***“You surely will not die!... He is saying God is lying. “God said you will die? You surely will not die when you eat that fruit!”*** Look what he says in Verse 5:

***Genesis 3:5 ~ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”***

What is the essence of the lie? You will be like God. Doesn’t that sound a lot like what Satan wanted? He wanted to be, he didn’t want to be above the most high, he wanted to be like the most high, and so what he has done is he has born spiritual offspring in Adam, and every child of Adam is the spiritual offspring then of Satan. And what we want is to be our own god, and that is the way things really are. That is why people get so angry.

I mean, you know, why do people get so emotional about certain issues? For instance, why are people who are pro-abortion so upset that those of us who say, “Listen, it is God’s prerogative to give life and to take life, and that is a baby that

you are killing.” Why do they get so mad? If they really think we are just kooks, like we are portrayed on TV, you know any time a Christian is there, they are just portrayed in some kind of sitcom or whatever, as *‘out to lunch’*. Who would care what we think? Why do they get so emotional about it? Because they know when they hear us speaking that we are speaking and they are hearing the echo of God’s voice Himself saying, “Thou shalt not...” And because they want to be their own god, they are determined, and angry, and enraged. The same thing with the homosexual lobby, why do they care so much? Because they know that God has said this is not the way. This isn’t the way to life. God made them male and female, as Jesus said from the beginning that is how He intended it. But the need for the Kingdom is evident in that sense, and so man thinks he is free, but he is really a slave, he is the slave of sin, and he is the slave of his father, the devil, he is a slave to unbelief. This is why, you know, it is important when we reason with unbelievers, we are supposed to persuade, like Paul did, to try to persuade people to follow Christ, but you’ve got to remember that when you are doing that, you are working in a situation where you need God to do something that only God can do. He has to give spiritual life because just like we were, we were slaves until we were set free.

One of the areas that you see this, to me in this amazing way, when I was in college 35 years ago, or 34 years ago, starting college, and I was a convinced 6<sup>th</sup> Day Creationist, and I went to a Southern Baptist college. You would have thought that was a safe place. None of the faculty believed, every one of the faculty that I ever met, I never found one who did not believe in evolution, at a Southern Baptist college. Things have changed, I mean, a lot of those people are no longer there, things have improved, but you know, evolution was just assumed to be true, even there in Christian circles. I mean, I don’t think many of those people were Christians, but still, there were some that were, and still believed in some kind of theistic evolution. It was tough then, there wasn’t any sign, I think the Institute for Creation Research was out there, but I hadn’t heard of it, and hadn’t written much, but in the last 30 or 35 years, it is amazing how much data has come in that has exploded evolution. But you know, the irony is, it doesn’t matter, they are still going to cling to unbelief, so many of them. Why? Because they are of their father, the devil, and they are bound in darkness. The god of this age has blinded their eyes.

A few weeks ago, and we are looking at the Doctrine of Creation in our men’s Bible study, we are working through a systematic theology on Friday mornings at 6:30, and it is has been a really good thing to work through. And looking at the issue of creation evolution and stuff, and biblical position, one of the gentlemen,

Brian Braxton, shared a quote from a noted evolutionist who is Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Harvard. He is a Nobel Prize winner in biology. Listen to what he said about evolution, or about how life came to be. This is a quote.

*There are only two possibilities as to how life arose. One is spontaneous generation arising to evolution.*

That is one, life just spontaneously happened, and it gave way to evolution.

*The other is the supernatural creative act of God.*

He said there is no third possibility, only two—spontaneous generation evolution or the supernatural creative act of God.

*Spontaneous generation that life arose from non-living matter was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others.*

He is saying that that possibility has been disproved for 120 years when he wrote this.

*That leaves us with only one possible conclusion, that life arose as a creative act of God.*

Listen to what he writes next.

*I will not accept that philosophically because I do not want to believe in God. Therefore, I choose to believe in that which I know is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation arising to evolution.*

That is the reality and you know, it is becoming more and more clear. Like I said, it was hard 35 years ago. There has been so much that has happened since then, God is opening the eyes of people who are still unbelievers, but they are finding science correctly. A guy named Michael Behe wrote the book Darwin's Black Box in the mid-90s, in which he basically makes irrefutable case that it is impossible for successive mutations to result in complex form, lifeforms. That you can't, it doesn't work, evolution as a mechanism cannot possibly, logically work. He is a microbiologist, and he studied the formation of the cells, and it basically says that the smallest single-cell creature is so complex that we cannot even build anything that approximates the complexity of the smallest single-cell organism. Well, what

do they do? They don't, many of them don't believe. Some of them come along and they dispense of that, and they look again at the Bible, but the others keep finding ways to stay in their unbelief.

We were reading in our studies about a guy named Stephen Gould who is one of the great minds, evolutionists. He came up with this new idea, because it is clear that you can't have complex beings forming over periods of time because all of the pieces have to be there at the same time. You can't form like one part of the animal and then the other part has to come along at its own rate. It has to all be there. So basically, evolution is debunked. He came up with this crazy idea that basically random processes, occasionally what happens is somehow there is this dramatic change from one animal to another, just boom, like a bird becomes something totally different in one day. He calls it '*punctuated equilibrium*', that basically the random processes happen and suddenly there are these, pow, changes. What is that? That is just a way to cling to unbelief. It is ridiculous. All you have to do is look under the hood and see there is no engine there. You know, pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. But it shows this determination to stay in unbelief.

### C) How Do You Become Free?

Now, the reality is that is true of every single person until we are born again. That is how things are, and how things got this way, and how do you become free? Well the good news is Jesus has been teaching this all throughout His ministry. When He was proclaiming the Kingdom of God, what He is proclaiming is, "Listen, I have come into the world to break the power of the one who has you bound. I have come to deliver you, to set you free." Basically they said, "Well, we've never been enslaved to anyone." You're not paying attention. If you sin you are the slave of sin, but if you will believe in the Son, the Son shall make you free. "If you continue in My word, My words continue in you. You will be truly My disciples, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." It is the truth of the Gospel, it is the truth that God came into the world, God the Son, entered time and space as an embryo in the womb of a young Jewish peasant girl. God entered our world, the Word became flesh, and then He is born, and as John says, after observing His life, "He tabernacled for a while among us, and we beheld His glory." Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. We saw God in the flesh, and when He came, He came to redeem, to deliver people from the domain of darkness, to the Kingdom of God's beloved Son, and He did this by dying for us on the cross. He bore our sins in His body on the cross. He was punished in our place so that God might righteously punish our sins, and yet

graciously pardon sinners. On the third day, He was raised from the dead to prove that He was a great Savior, and He offered an acceptable sacrifice.

This is what Jesus had told Nicodemus. Remember when He talked to Nicodemus, one of the most religious men in Israel of his day? Jesus refers to him, “You’re the teacher of Israel and you don’t understand the things I’m telling you?” Remember? He was a Pharisee, He was a member of the Sanhedrin, and the teacher of Israel. He was the Bible teacher of Israel. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again. Except you’re born again, you will not see the Kingdom of God. To enter into the Kingdom of God, you must be spiritually born.” An idea of born again really means, could also be translated *‘born from above’*. If you are going to see the Kingdom of God, you must be born from outside of this realm. The Spirit of God must give you a new heart. He must give you eyes to see, and ears to hear, and so what are we to do? We are to cry out to God for salvation. If you are here today, and you don’t know the Lord Jesus Christ, cry out to Him. He is mighty to save and He will never turn away anyone who comes to Him, repenting and believing. Trust completely in His work, His finished work, He will save you.

Now, the reality is that if we do nothing, if we do nothing, though we feel like things are great, in reality we are enslaved, sin reigns. Now I want to talk to those of us who are believers now for a moment because this idea of the Kingdom of God has relevance every day of our lives. The reality is that when you and I wake up, though we have new hearts, if you do nothing, sin reigns. Because of the presence of sin in us, indwelling sin still in us, though the power of Satan has been broken, and we’ve been delivered, and brought into the Kingdom of God’s Son, in our bodies we still find that evil is in us, in our sin nature, don’t we? And the Scripture is clear that if you get up in the morning, and you just go through the day, as often we just kind of think that we can. I mean, I know that my tendency, I want to coast through life. You might be riding a bicycle, and you find those places where you can coast, how great it was. Up a hill and now I want to coast. I want to coast all the way to Heaven, right? The reality is there is no coasting, very little. If you do nothing, sin reigns. Galatians 5:16 is one place where it tells you this. It says:

***Galatians 5:16 ~ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.***

The implication is, if we don’t walk by the Spirit, we will carry out the desire of the flesh. He says:

***Galatians 5:17 ~For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.***

He says, “Every day you wake up, the flesh wants to rule over you, the sin nature.” So that if we don’t consciously submit to the Kingship of Jesus Christ, on a moment by moment basis, what will happen is, we will coast, and we’ll coast into sin. That is why in so many areas of our lives the evidence of God’s Kingship is not there. Whatever area that you have, and I have where we struggle, why are we struggling? It is because something is not submitted to Jesus. I mean, we struggle with anger, lust, fear, in each of these areas the answer is the Kingship of Jesus. That is, in the area of anger, when we get angry when things aren’t the way we want them, and a lot of times we get angry and we think it is righteous anger, you know? “If you guys would just do what I’m telling you to do, which is clearly the right thing, then I wouldn’t need to get angry. You all are the problem,” you know? You feel like that sometimes when you talk with your kids. You may not say it that way. We can pretty it up a little bit, but the tone of our voice, the volume of our voice betrays our heart. The problem is at that moment, what I’m wanting you to do, what I want you to do for my purposes, and I know that, and I have an indicator, a built-in indicator that tells me that, and that is my sinful anger.

Because if I was really submitted to the Kingship of God, I would realize, I say you want to coast, you come home from work, you’re exhausted, you’re spent, and you’re thinking, “Oh man, I’m so glad to be home. I can’t wait to go in, eat, and just sit down.” You are already kind of mapping out the evening, right? And then, there is a problem, and the problem a lot of times is that somebody is sinning. Maybe the kids, there is some kind of problem going on. Your wife greets you at the door with, “You need to talk to…” And what are you doing? This is what our sinful response is, you go to talk to your child and it’s like, “Hey, what are you doing? You’re not doing what is right, and really what I’m upset about is you’re messing up my evening, and I’ll make you pay,” and that is why we yell, and what needs to happen is we need to submit to the Kingship of Jesus Christ when we come home. “Lord, I really would like to have this, and this, and this, and this, and this happen tonight,” and we walk in the door, “but I know that I’m Your slave. I’m not the king of anything. I’m not the king of one moment of time, though I act like it. I’m Your slave, what do You have for me to do?” And so when you go in, and your wife says you need to talk to your child, “Lord, thank You for this opportunity to serve You. You just reminded me, I don’t think I have the energy. I think it is a bad plan for You to put me on this task right now, but I’m not in charge, I’m Your slave, and You obviously know what You are doing, so give me

grace, and help me.” And when we go into that, and we run into difficulty, it is just continuing to submit, and continuing to submit, and what happens is righteousness, and power, and the Kingdom goes forth in our hearts, and through us to those around us. So it is the Kingdom of God every day, and praise God we have a King who is gentle, and gracious, and calls Himself a shepherd. He puts up with dumb sheep like you and me.

Let’s go to the Lord in prayer.

*Father, we thank You for the wonder of Your mercy and grace. That You looked upon a world that was in rebellion, and You looked upon individuals that were in rebellion like me, and like those gathered in this room, who wanted to live for ourselves, for our own purposes, and wanted just to tell You to stay out of our lives. And yet, You showed mercy, and compassion, and loved us enough to do what we didn’t want You to do, to come down, and to come spiritually knocking on our hearts’ doors, and granting us new life. And Father, when You opened our eyes, we were thrilled because we realize this was what we needed all along. We needed to be set free from sin, we needed to be set free to love our Savior. Lord, help us be more grateful, and we pray for those that are here that need to today submit to Jesus Christ. Let them hear the offer of salvation, and the urgency of the moment, where You said Lord, in Psalm 2, “Kiss the Son, lest you become angry, and you perish in the way. Today, submit to Christ.” Father, we thank You for the glory of salvation You’ve made known to us. Help us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

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