

Kingdoms in Conflict

Part One

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2019.10.20



Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Discussion & Application

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- On what issues in the Christian life have you experienced "cultural push-back"? Tell us about it.
- Was there ever a time when you did not believe in a literal Satan? Do you now? Tell us about it.
Who or what has been most influential in shaping your views?
- Dr. Charles Ryrie has defined *cosmos* as: "That world system organized by Satan, headed by Satan, and run by Satan, which **leaves God out** and is a rival to Him."

Does your workplace, your child's school, your homeowner's association, the US government, etc. "**leave God out**" of it's considerations and functions? If so, what else should you conclude about it?

- Read James 3:14—4:12
How does the concept of "kingdoms in conflict" shed light on James 3:15 & 17?
From the following verses, list the "distinguishing marks" which help us discern the source of our "wisdom":

James 3:13b-14a

James 4:8

James 3:16-18

James 4:9

James 4:1-2

James 4:10

James 4:3

James 4:11

James 4:6

James 4:12

Creating "God Space": "God Space" is where cynics, skeptics, and spiritually curious people can safely raise their questions, reservations, & doubts because we have listened well and demonstrated love in practical, authentic ways.

We have **many** neighbors and friends for whom the idea of "God's kingdom" and (especially!) "Satan's kingdom" will sound like fairy tales!

- What questions could you ask them to uncover **their own** beliefs about the origin of evil in the world?
- Summarize this week's sermon in **plain language** which they could understand and find reasonable.

Application-Challenge

- There are **only two** kingdoms. Whom will you serve—God or Satan?

Sermon Summary Key Concept: *cosmos*

We recently concluded a study of 1st Peter which is an important book for the church today because in it Peter warns Christians not to be surprised by cultural pushback. Biblically informed Christians shouldn't be surprised by this, because the Bible reveals that there is an invisible spiritual world that is just as real and influential as the visible world. In that world two kingdoms are at war: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and the turmoil you see in our world today is the outworking of these two conflicting kingdoms. Over the next couple of weeks, we hope to open your eyes to the reality of this conflict so that you will be better prepared to emerge as victors rather than victims.

Ephesians 6 highlights this spiritual battle, but I suspect that most of us are unaware of its origin even if we see its effects around us. A good way to begin is by examining the word "cosmos."

I. The meaning of the Greek word "cosmos":

- implies an ordered system
- is used to describe the universe, the inhabited earth, people, and the organized operations of Satan's kingdom in the New Testament
- is defined by Dr. Charles Ryrie as: "that world system organized by Satan, headed by Satan, and run by Satan, which leaves our God out and is a rival to Him."
- is couched in language of marital fidelity in James' warning regarding the cosmos (James 4:4)

It is clear that this world system in which we live poses a great danger to God's people. Its values and methods are contrary to God's values and methods.

II. Satan's authority over the cosmos:

- The New Testament makes some startling statements about Satan's authority over the cosmos.
- God granted Satan authority over the kingdoms of this fallen world (Luke 4:5-7).
- Satan's authority is only temporary and is limited by God's sovereignty.
- Satan will be defeated when Jesus returns and will receive eternal punishment.
- All of us are impacted by Satan's schemes.
(John 12:31, John 14:30, John 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 6:12, and 1 John 5:19)

III. Satan's Ambition, Goal, Message and Passion:

A. Satan's ambition:

- to become like the Most High God
- to be openly worshipped, which happens over a long period of continuous and subtle human rejection of God

B. Satan's Goal:

- to create a system that rival's God's kingdom
- to lead people away from genuine faith in Christ

C. Satan's Message:

- a call to human reformation and self-improvement in all of its manifestations; i.e. a religion of works and human effort, which stands in stark contrast to God's message of reliance on Him and what he has already done for us

D. Satan's Passion:

- his personal success
- thwarting God's success

We must recognize the presence and impact of these two distinct kingdoms, which have conflicting ambitions, goals, messages and passions. Paul reminds us in Romans 6 that we have daily choices regarding which kingdom we will serve and advance, and these choices have major ramifications.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) *is a simple way to study any topic.*
Let's use it to understand more about God's fallen "cosmos"...

Monday— Matthew 16:24-26 What might it look like to "gain the **whole** cosmos"?

Tuesday— John 3:16-21 (*cosmos* appears 4x, in v. 16, 17 and 19)

Wednesday— 1 John 4:1-14 (*cosmos* appears 5x, in v. 1, 5, 9 and 14)

Thursday— 1 John 5:1-5 (*cosmos* appears 3x, in v. 4 and 5)

Friday— James 4:1-10 (*cosmos* appears 2x, in v. 4)

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshiping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study 1 John 2:15-19.

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]