

PASTOR RAY'S BIBLE SCHOOL 201

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

(How To Apply The Prophetic View Of Scripture To The Book Of Genesis)

Session Four

“The Clash Of Two Kingdoms”

" All the world's a stage,
And all the **men and women merely players...**"

William Shakespeare, from **“As You Like It”**

I. A Prophetic View Of Human History

A. The Stage Is Set

1. Even though Genesis 1:1 begins with the creation of heaven and earth, we have seen the origins of God's story predate history.

2. The origin of evil, the entrance of a “second will” into creation, is marked by the rebellion of Lucifer and 1/3rd of the angelic host. The predictable result of this uprising: Lucifer and his forces are expelled from the heavenly domain into the earthly realms.

a. Since God is sovereign, we must recognize that God allowed the rebellion of Lucifer to take place and also allowed him to establish a rival kingdom, described by Jesus as “undivided”

3. The war in heaven, (see Revelation 12) moves to earth.

a. Lucifer, after the fall known as the “Devil” or “Satan”, seems to be lurking about the Garden of Eden, which explains why God charges Adam to “keep” or “guard” the Garden.

4. The earth becomes the “theater” or “stage” upon which this cosmic conflict, this “clash of two kingdoms”, is played out.

a. The first two chapters of the Bible precede the sin of man. The last two chapters of the Bible describe conditions after sin is fully dealt with. All the rest is conflict.

5. It will be helpful to us to keep in mind there are only two “kingdoms” in existence: On the one hand, there is God’s kingdom; on the other side, there is any *other* kingdom that opposes God.

B. The Clash Of Two Kingdoms

1. In a very real sense, the Bible is the record of the clash of two “kingdoms”, with the souls of men as the prize.

<u>The Kingdom Of God</u>	(Versus)	<u>The Kingdom Of Satan</u>
Creator Led		Creature Led
Infinite		Finite
God’s will done		“Another” will done
True God		False god
God’s Word		Any “competing” or contradictory word

a. Satan is the “head” or “ruler” of all that opposes God.

b. While there are many religions, philosophies and worldviews that oppose the Kingdom of God, it is helpful to see them all as “one”, not “many”. All that opposes God can be collectivized as “other”.

2. This helps us to understand the “exclusive” statements of Jesus:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

New Living Testament

a. There may seem to be many “ways” to God; there may seem to be many “truths” or many ways of “life”; but if Jesus is THE way, THE truth, and THE life, there are really only two “choices” available to us: Jesus...or any “other” choice.

3. In the same way God allowed Lucifer the “free will” to oppose Him. So now God will allow man and woman the same ability to choose.

4. Man was given two “choices”, represented by the two “trees” which were in the midst of the Garden: the “tree of life” and the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”, (Genesis 2:9).

a. Man was given permission to “freely eat” of all the trees in the Garden, including the Tree of Life, with one exception...

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress (cultivate) it and to keep (guard) it. And the Lord God *commanded* the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof you shall surely die.

Gen 2:15-17

KJV

5. These two ‘trees’ represent the two sides in the “clash between two kingdoms”:

<u>Tree of Life</u>	<u>Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil</u>
Obedience	Disobedience (Rebellion)
Dependence on God	Independence from God
Kingdom Of God	A (Any) Competing Kingdom

6. Keep in mind the “seed principle” we learned in the Creation account. Everything God made had “the seed within itself”, the power of reproduction. And so it is with these two trees. The Tree of Life contained life-giving seed. But the second tree contained death-dealing “seed”, the ability to bring about the death of man. *These the two trees contain “seeds” representing the two “kingdoms”.*

a. The Tree of Life represents God’s Word.

b. The “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” represents the death that will result from choosing poorly*.

**The tree was related to “knowledge” apart from (or independent) of God. The study of knowledge is “epistemology”. It’s the study of how we know what we know. The term “good and evil” means the tree was related to “ethics”, our systems of right and wrong, just and unjust, etc. The prophetic view of scripture understands the issues are always epistemological and ethical. God intended man to “know” good and evil by revelation. God would reveal to man that which was right and wrong, good and evil. Man was forbidden to pursue ethics apart from God. His “knowledge” was to be found in God and all God would reveal to him.*

7. The choice set before Adam is prototypical of every human being. The choice between the “two trees” stands before us today, a choice between two “kingdoms”!

C. The Tree Of Death

1. Consider Gods warning to man concerning the evil tree:

“You shall not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it, you shall surely die.”

Genesis 2:17

2. The “death” described, we learn later, was not physical death. Man did eat. But he did not die physically until hundreds of years later. Since we know God cannot lie, we know that the “death” that took place when Adam and Eve disobeyed was a “spiritual” death, *separation from God*.

3. The Bible teaches that all men live forever, that physical death does not mean to cease to exist. Those who do not have “eternal” life will not cease to exist, but they will exist in an eternal condition of separation from God. This is how we must understand the “death” God warned them about.

4. Sin brings displacement. Lucifer’s sin cast out of heaven. Adam’s sin would cast out of the Garden. If Adam aligned himself with Lucifer, he would suffer separation from God, which is spiritual death.

D. Man In The Middle

1. And so Adam becomes a man in the middle of the “clash of two kingdoms”, represented in the two “trees”. He will have to choose his alignment because neutrality is impossible.

a. There are really only two “wills” in the universe. God’s. And any other will. Lucifer is allowed to lead and represent the will that is opposed to God.

b. Adam will have to choose one or the other. He will align his will with God’s will or he won’t. If he won’t, he does not become a third “will”...he merely aligns himself with Lucifer, that which opposes God.

c. We repeat. There is no “neutrality”.

2. Adam has true “free-will” in the sense that he was created in innocence. His soul was not contaminated with sin.*

**Arminian theology holds that all men have unlimited free will, endowed with moral ability to choose or reject God. In Reformed theology, “free will” is defined in more limited terms. The Reformers taught that man’s freedom to choose is limited to that which is consistent with his nature. Adam was truly “free” in the sense that in his original condition, he had no “sin nature” to restrict his ability to choose. However, Adam’s sin not only corrupted his own soul, but resulted in the spiritual death of the “seed” within him. When Adam chose to disobey God, he fell into a condition of spiritual death, of separation from God. Adam acted as the “covenant head” of his race. After his sin, all he could do was reproduce “after his own kind”, all he could bring forth were children in his own image and likeness, which was now (after sin) fallen from grace.*

3. Adam, as the “head” or “father” of his race, was acting not only for himself, but as the covenantal representative of all his children! There is no way to calculate the enormity of the consequences of the decision set before him.

a. If he disobeyed, he would die spiritually, he would suffer separation from God.

b. And since his “seed” was still within him, his choice would affect all who would be born of him.

4. The choice set before him was more than two ‘trees’. It was two ‘kingdoms’, two ‘masters’, two destinies...in short, the choice was life or death, for him and his ‘seed’, his offspring!!!

5. The stakes in the conflict could hardly be higher.

II. Dominion By Covenant: Placement And Work

A The Principle Of Placement

1. The first purpose of man’s creation was to “have dominion”, meaning that he was to “rule” the Creation as God’s delegate.

a. This awesome privilege carried responsibility.

b. The details of how he was to have dominion involve placement and employment.

2. Before man is tested with the choice between two kingdoms, he is *given jurisdictional placement*.

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made.

Gen 2:8-9 New Living Testament

a. Adam was not created in Eden. He was sovereignly “taken” by God and “placed” there. Adam, as the prototype of all his descendents, becomes a model for us to study. Here the principle is “jurisdictional” authority. God’s will for mankind was that they “have authority” (or “dominion”)...but each man is given a jurisdictional authority over a particular sphere of responsibility. (See Paul’s revelation of this regarding his own ministry in 2 Corinthians 10:12-13)

b. Only God rules over all. Each man or woman is given a particular placement, a “sphere” or “measure” of authority, for which he/she will be held accountable (See Jesus’ parables on stewardship)

c. All placements or assignments are “stewardships”; God is the “owner” or “landlord”; man is His “delegate” or “manager”.

3. Finding our proper placement defines our sphere of authority or dominion.

B. A Theology Of Work

1. When God places the man, He gives him a job.

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.
Genesis 2:15 KJV

2. Placement and employment are essential to fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives.

3. Notice that God gave Adam a *job* before He gave him a *wife*! We are not created for idleness. God is a “Worker”. Man is made in the “image and likeness of God”, (imago Dei), and can never find fulfillment without a proper “employment”. (John 5:17)

4. This is the first mention in the Bible of *work*. Genesis teaches us that work is a *blessing* to man, not a curse. God gave Adam a job (in Genesis 2) *before* the “curse” (that came as a result of sin) is pronounced in Genesis 3.

5. The “work” or “vocation” God gives us has two elements: Cultivation and Guardianship

a. The first principle of “work” is “cultivation”. The term “cultivate” means “to improve through diligent effort”. Whatever placement or jurisdiction we are given is to be improved by us being there. It’s helpful here to realize that everything man had invented/made/created has come out of the original earth God made and committed to man. All improvements, technology and life enrichment has come into existence as man had fulfilled God’s original commandment to “cultivate” the earth. This cultivation was to be gradual. It was to be a process of progress. It was to operate in the law of sowing and reaping.

b. The second element of our work is the responsibility to guard and protect our jurisdictional assignment. Man was not only to improve the Garden, he was commanded to “keep” it. We’ve already noted that this was an indirect reference to the presence of God’s (and man’s) enemy, the fallen angel now known as Satan. Whatever God gives us must be improved upon and guarded lest the enemy take it away. This principle applies to our marriage as well as to our parental and occupational responsibilities

6. The specific mechanics of dominion are revealed here. Man is given God's law as a "tool of dominion", the means by which he accomplishes God's ends.

7. The order is important: First, God gives man life. Then, He gives man His laws or commandments to know how to live the life God has given him.

8. The principles of placement and employment are accompanied by the "first mention" of God's law. All the laws and commandments of God are here in "seed form", and give us clues as to how the law works throughout scripture.

D. The Law Of God: Man's "Tool Of Dominion"

1. As we study the entrance of God's law into the Creation story, we can see how pitting the law against grace is a tragic error.

2. Nowhere in scripture are we taught that men are saved or made right with God by keeping the Law.

a. Adam did not come to life because he kept the law. Life was God's gracious gift. The commandments were given him so he could know how to live the life God has given him.

b. The pattern holds true when God "saves" Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Keeping the law did not get Israel out of Egypt. Salvation came through the delivering power of the blood of the lamb and was the gracious gift of God. But as soon as God saved them out of Egypt, He gave them His law, the keeping of which was to be their "tool" of dominion for possessing the promised land

c. The same principle applies to New Testament Christianity. We are "born again" by the power of God, saved by grace with no merit of our own involved. (Ephesians 2:8-10) But how shall we then live this new life we've been so graciously given? (John 14:15)

3. The clear implication of Genesis 2:15-17 is that Adam's authority and freedoms were inviolable *on condition of obedience* to God's word!

E. God's Covenant Law-Word

1. The commands given to Adam were covenantal in nature, containing 5 elements:*

**The historical model of the ancient Suzerain treaties is in view here. A conquering warlord (or king) dictates the terms of ultimate surrender to the conquered one. These treaties contained 5 distinct segments, listed below, and can be remembered by the acronym "T.H.E.O.S."*

- Transcendancy-Spoken by the One in authority
- Hierarchy-Man is clearly "under God", subject to Him in the terms of the relationship
- Ethics-The rules, the "do's" and "don'ts" laid down by the Sovereign

- Oaths (Sanctions)-The rewards of obedience and the penalties of disobedience set forth
- Succession-The generational dimension of covenant-keeping or covenant-breaking; the fact that future generational blessing is only guaranteed to the obedient

**An illustration of this may be helpful. When we look for employment, we want to know:*

“Who’s in charge?” (Transcendency)

“To whom do I report?” (Hierarchy)

“What are the rules?” (Ethics)

“What are the benefits (or penalties)?” (Oaths/Sanctions)

“Does this job have a future?” (Succession)

2. Consider commandment given to Adam:

a. God dictates the terms

b. Man is “under God” in the relationship

c. The commandment contains the ethics and oaths (sanctions or penalties) of the covenant:

- Permission-“of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat”
- Prohibition-“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it”
- Penalty-“For in the day you eat of it you shall surely die”

d. The succession is implied...man abiding in the covenant enjoys the blessing and protection of the Sovereign, for himself as well as his descendents, allowing man to “replenish the earth” and “expand” the Garden of his jurisdiction.

3. God made all the trees. But only TWO are specifically mentioned: the “Tree Of Life”, and the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”. Man has two options in life. And there is no neutrality.

4. The Law was a gracious gift from God-a revelation of the means of obtaining blessing as well as the revelation of what would kill them!*

**Notice that only God knew which tree was capable of robbing them of life and liberty...and He chose to (graciously) REVEAL it to them. God did not intend for them to discover what would kill them by trial and error!*

5. Until we understand the connection between obedience and dominion, we’ll continually confuse the principles of grace and law, and suffer the consequences.

III. Conclusion

A. Preparing For The Fall

1. The stage is set for the clash of two Kingdoms.
2. The two “trees” are the issue.
3. The Word of God, “thou shalt surely die”, is about to be contradicted by the serpent, “Thou shalt not surely die”. (Genesis 2:17, Genesis 3:4)
4. Man’s dominion, placement, purpose, and even his very life depend on which kingdom he will align himself with.
5. In our next class, we’ll focus on how it all went wrong...the most cataclysmic event in human history...the Fall of Man.