



Scripture: Genesis 3:1-7, Genesis 11:1-9, 1 Samuel 8:1-9

What's up, students? I hope you are all doing well. I know that I am excited to be here with you, especially because we are going to dig into a big question that really should be thought about every day! Here it is: *Whose kingdom are you building—yours or God's?*

When we talk about a “kingdom,” I’m not talking about castles, stone walls, or towers reaching into the clouds. I don’t think any of you are currently building a castle in your backyard. Instead, I am talking about a symbolic kingdom, one that represents what you prioritize, what you live for, and where your heart truly belongs. This kingdom is made up of the choices you make, the things you value most, and the way you invest your time and energy. It’s not about physical structures; it’s about what rules your life. Are you focused on building a life centered on your own desires, success, and comfort? Or are you surrendering your life to God and allowing Him to shape your priorities and purpose? This symbolic kingdom reflects what truly matters to you and who or what sits on the throne of your heart.

Let’s be real. We all have someone or something that is sitting on the throne of our lives and dictates what we do and why we do it. This is who or what we worship. We all worship something! Even if you say you don’t believe in God or any gods, it just means something else is sitting on the throne of your life. Maybe it’s success, where everything you do revolves around getting ahead or proving yourself. Maybe it’s popularity, where your decisions are driven by what other people think about you. It could even be comfort, where your main goal is to avoid anything hard. Whatever it is, that thing sitting on the throne of your life becomes what you worship; it’s what shapes your choices, your goals, and your identity. The question isn’t *if* you worship something; it’s *what* or *who* you worship. And that’s why it’s so important to ask: Whose kingdom are you building?

So, let’s start with prayer and then we will dive into God’s Word.

[Pray.]

We need to start at the very beginning! In the beginning, God created everything. He made the land, the seas, the plants, the animals, the stars in the sky, and finally, He created mankind. Everything God made was good, and everything brought glory to Him. But when God made Adam and Eve, He did something extraordinary. He created them in His image, setting them apart from the rest of creation. That alone is a huge deal.

Being made in God's image means we have value that nothing and no one can take away. It also means we reflect parts of His character, like creativity, the ability to care for others, and the responsibility to manage what He's entrusted to us. And it doesn't stop there! God didn't just give us inherent value; He also gave us a profound purpose. We were created to glorify Him, not only in how we live, but also in how we reflect His goodness and love to the world. Our purpose was to worship Him, not just in song or prayer, but through how we care for His creation and live in relationship with Him.

Think about it like this: God is the owner of a business, and we're His middle management. He didn't give us responsibility because He couldn't handle it, He's more than capable, but because He wanted to partner with us. He entrusted us with His creation, giving us the privilege of stewardship.

But then, something went wrong. Let's open up our Bible's to **Genesis 3:1-7 (NIV)**.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he

ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

This is the first instance where we see mankind seeking to establish their own kingdom. You see, Adam and Eve weren't content with their roles in God's kingdom. Instead of glorifying God and trusting His plan, they reached for control, choosing their own way over His. And that choice changed everything. As a result of their disobedience, sin entered the world and the consequences were devastating. Most devastating of all was Adam and Eve's separation from God's presence. They were banished from the Garden of Eden.

I truly wish I could tell you this was the last occasion that mankind sought to glorify their own name, but just a couple of chapters later we see another example. Let's turn to **Genesis 11:1-9 (NIV)**.

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

The people decided to build a giant tower. Now, before we start throwing shade, let's get this straight: God isn't against creativity or hard work. He loves when we innovate! The problem was the motivation of *why* they were



1. What stands out to you the most about the difference between Herod's kingdom and Jesus' kingdom?
 - a. *Follow-up:* Which of these two mindsets feels more natural in our culture today, and why?
2. What does the "kingdom" you are building look like right now?
3. Surrendering to God's kingdom requires trust and letting go of control. What do you find hardest to surrender to God, and why?
4. What does it look like to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" in your everyday life?
5. What practical steps could you take this week to focus more on God's kingdom rather than your own desires or worries?

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