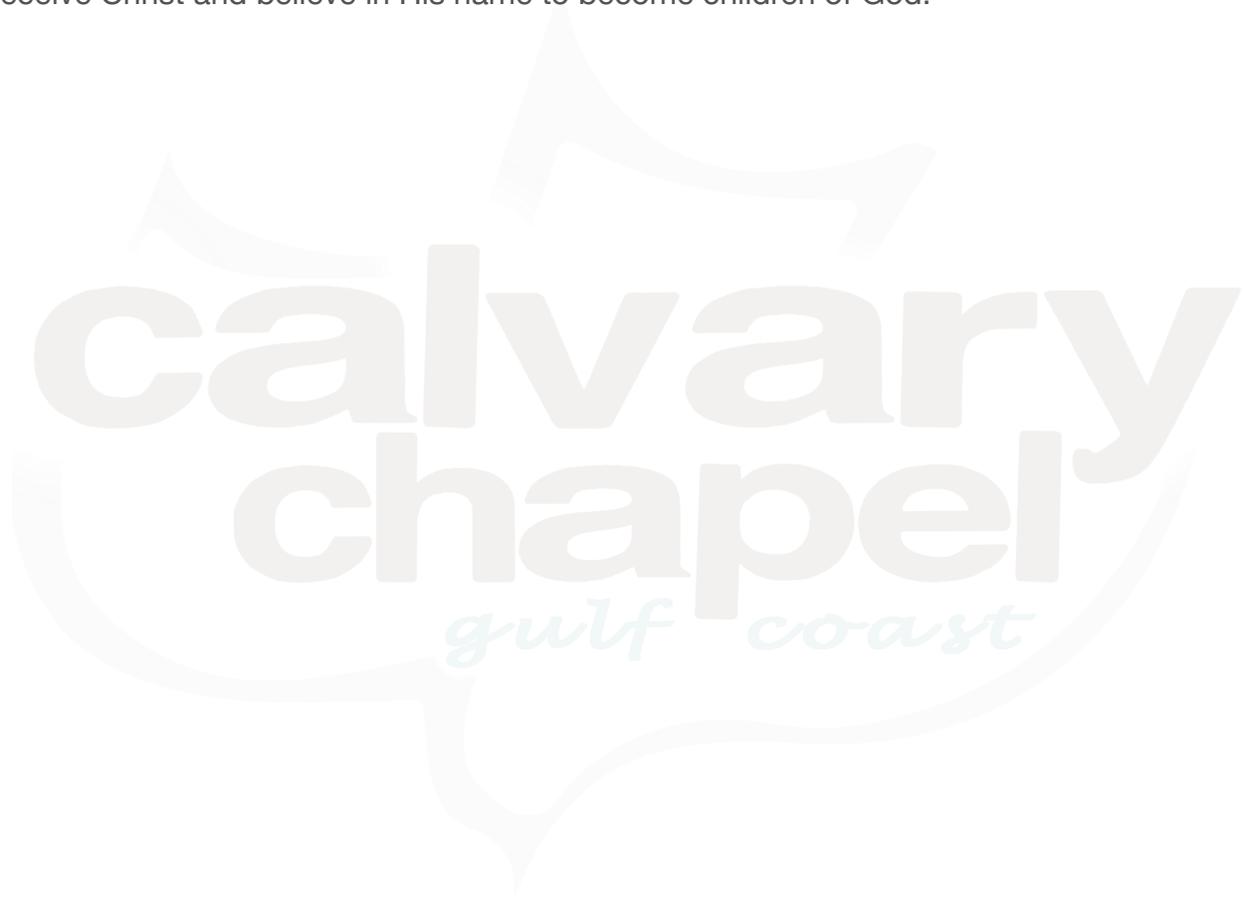




Summary

This powerful message confronts us with an uncomfortable but essential truth: there are only two spiritual kingdoms operating in our world, and we must choose which one we belong to. Through an examination of Jesus' trials before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, we witness Satan's kingdom fully exposed in all its deception, violence, and self-serving manipulation. The religious leaders broke their own laws repeatedly—holding trials at night, in private homes, without proper witnesses, forcing self-incrimination, and rendering verdicts without proper procedure. Their foregone conclusion to kill Jesus reveals how Satan's kingdom always operates through force, lies, and self-interest. In stark contrast, Jesus' kingdom advances through truth and self-sacrifice. He remained silent like the prophesied lamb before its shearers, yet spoke truth when necessary, declaring His identity even when it meant His death. The question this message poses to each of us is deeply personal: which kingdom are we advancing in our daily lives? When we tell half-truths, seek our own advantage, or use manipulation instead of honesty, we align ourselves with Satan's methods. But when we embrace truth and practice self-sacrifice, we demonstrate that we belong to Jesus' kingdom. The only way to truly enter this kingdom is through spiritual rebirth—being born again as Jesus explained to Nicodemus. We cannot join through good works or religious activity; we must receive Christ and believe in His name to become children of God.





Points

Title: Two Kingdoms on Trial: Satan's Kingdom vs. Jesus' Kingdom

Sermon Summary: This sermon examines the trials of Jesus Christ as a revelation of the fundamental differences between Satan's kingdom and Jesus' kingdom. Through detailed analysis of Jesus' illegal trials before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, the pastor exposes how Satan's kingdom operates through force, deception, false testimony, and self-serving motives, while Jesus' kingdom advances through truth and self-sacrifice. The message emphasizes that there is no middle ground—every person belongs to one of two kingdoms, and the only way to enter Jesus' kingdom is through spiritual rebirth. The sermon also announces the church's plans to expand their children's ministry facility, recognizing the priority Jesus placed on children. The central challenge is for believers to discern which kingdom is being advanced in world events and in their own lives, and to consciously choose to be part of Jesus' kingdom through receiving Him as Lord and Savior.

Key Points:

- There are only two spiritual kingdoms on earth: the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of Satan
- To be undecided about Jesus is to have decided against Him—there is no neutral ground
- The only way to enter Jesus' kingdom is to be born again spiritually
- Satan's kingdom operates through twelve specific tactics revealed in Jesus' trials: predetermined verdicts, false testimony, secret proceedings, illegal venues, incomplete councils, forced self-incrimination, physical intimidation, bypassing proper procedures, ignoring prophecy, manipulation of authority, philosophical relativism, and yielding to political pressure
- All trials of Jesus were illegal according to Jewish law: held at night, in private homes, without all council members, without proper witnesses, forcing self-incrimination, and without the required waiting period for death sentences
- Satan's kingdom is always advanced by force and is always self-serving
- Jesus' kingdom is always advanced by truth and is always self-sacrificing
- Pilate declared Jesus innocent three times yet still condemned Him
- The church is expanding with a 4,800 square foot children's ministry facility, reflecting Jesus' priority on children
- Every lie, betrayal, and false accusation originates from Satan's influence
- Believers must discern which kingdom is being advanced in current events and personal situations

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 12:30 - "He who is not with me is against me"
- John 1:12 - Receiving Christ and becoming children of God
- John 3:3-7 - Jesus' teaching to Nicodemus about being born again
- John 8:44 - Jesus identifying the devil as the father of lies
- John 11:47-53 - The Sanhedrin's plot to kill Jesus
- John 12:27-32 - Jesus speaking of Satan being cast out and being lifted up



- John 18:19-40 - Jesus' trials before Annas and Pilate
- Matthew 26:59-68 - False testimony and abuse during the trial
- Luke 22:63-71 - The mockery and beating of Jesus
- Luke 23:4-12 - Jesus before Herod
- Genesis 49:10 - Prophecy that the scepter would not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes
- Matthew 20:17-19 - Jesus prophesying His death and resurrection
- Isaiah 53:7 - Prophecy of the Messiah being silent like a lamb before shearers
- Zechariah 11:12-13 - Prophecy of the thirty pieces of silver

Stories:

- The announcement of the church's building expansion plans for children's ministry, including architectural details and the 4,800 square foot addition
- Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night and later defending Him before the Pharisees
- The temple guards sent to arrest Jesus returning empty-handed saying "no one speaks like this man"
- Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver
- The chief priest going through the streets proclaiming "the scripture has been broken" when Rome removed Jewish authority to execute, unaware that Shiloh (Messiah) was already present as a boy in Nazareth
- The religious leaders' concern about ceremonial cleanliness for Passover while simultaneously murdering their Messiah—illustrating Jesus' teaching about straining out gnats while swallowing camels
- Pilate and Herod becoming friends over their mutual involvement in Jesus' trial, though they had previously been enemies
- The crowd choosing to release Barabbas, a murderer and robber, instead of Jesus





Scripture

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned References

1. **Matthew 12:30** - "He who is not with me is against me"
2. **John 1:12** - Receiving Christ and becoming children of God
3. **John 3:3-7** - Born again conversation with Nicodemus
4. **John 8:44** - "You are of your father, the devil"
5. **John 11:47-53** - Council plotting Jesus' death after raising Lazarus
6. **John 18:19-24** - Jesus before Annas
7. **Matthew 26:3-5** - Chief priests plotting to take Jesus by trickery
8. **Matthew 26:14-16** - Judas betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver
9. **Zechariah 11:12-13** - Prophecy of 30 pieces of silver
10. **John 12:27-32** - Jesus troubled; "Now the ruler of this world will be cast out"
11. **John 7:50-51** - Nicodemus defending Jesus
12. **Matthew 26:59-68** - False witnesses and trial before Caiaphas
13. **Isaiah 53:7** - "As a lamb before its shearers is silent"
14. **Luke 22:63-71** - Jesus mocked, beaten, and questioned
15. **Leviticus 21:10** - High priest not to tear his clothes
16. **Genesis 49:10-12** - "The scepter shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes"
17. **Matthew 20:17-19** - Jesus predicting His death and resurrection
18. **Luke 23:4-12** - Jesus before Herod
19. **John 18:28-40** - Jesus before Pilate; "What is truth?"
20. **John 19:4-6** - Pilate declaring Jesus' innocence three times
21. **Luke 12** - Reference to Pilate killing Galileans
22. **John 2** - Jesus speaking of destroying and rebuilding the temple

Additional Context References

23. **Matthew 26:63** - High priest adjuring Jesus to testify
24. **Genesis 49** (general) - Jacob's prophecies to his sons
25. **The Passover narrative** - Lamb brought in on 10th of Nisan, slaughtered on 14th

Relevant Verses for Main Themes

Based on the sermon's themes about the two kingdoms, truth vs. lies, and Jesus' innocence, these additional verses align with the discussion:

- **1 John 5:19** - "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one"



- **Colossians 1:13** - Transferred from kingdom of darkness to kingdom of light
- **John 14:6** - "I am the way, the truth, and the life"
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** - "The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers"
- **Ephesians 2:1-3** - Dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath
- **1 Peter 2:22** - "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth"
- **Acts 2:23** - Jesus delivered by God's determined purpose
- **Romans 5:8** - "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"





Quotes

Unless and until we have made a conscious decision to be in Jesus' kingdom, we remain in Satan's kingdom. He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad.

The only way to be part of Jesus' kingdom is to be born into it spiritually. You can't join it. You can't sign up. You can only be born into it spiritually.

Satan says you don't need to think about it. You're a pretty good person and as long as you keep doing more good than you do bad, you have a chance to end up in heaven. And that's the predominant thinking in the world today.

Jesus looks them in the face and says, you are of your father, the devil. And they had no idea, as most people have no idea.

Satan's kingdom is always advanced by force and it is always self-serving. Jesus' kingdom, on the other hand, is always advanced by truth, and only by truth, and is always self-sacrificing.

Just about every child that comes to our children's ministry gets saved. I wish I could say that about the adults in the sanctuary.

The verdict was a foregone conclusion even as they drew Jesus into these various trials. From that day on they plotted to put him to death.

Jesus who holds all things together was holding their fists together as they were pounding him. He was holding their mouths and their saliva together as they were spitting in his face.



Discussion Questions

Jesus said 'he who is not with me is against me' - how does this challenge the common belief that being a 'good person' is enough for salvation?

The sermon describes Satan's kingdom as advanced by force and self-serving, while Jesus' kingdom is advanced by truth and self-sacrificing - where do you see these two kingdoms at work in your daily life?

Nicodemus asked how a man can be born again when he is old - what does it truly mean to be 'born again' and have you experienced this spiritual rebirth?

Jesus remained silent during much of his trial, fulfilling Isaiah 53:7 - when have you felt called to remain silent in the face of false accusations, and how did that reflect Christ's example?

The religious leaders had a 'foregone conclusion' about Jesus before the trial even began - in what ways might we approach spiritual matters with predetermined conclusions rather than seeking truth?

Pilate asked 'What is truth?' and then walked away - how does modern relativism ('your truth vs my truth') prevent people from encountering Jesus as the ultimate Truth?

The sermon notes that 'to be undecided is to have decided' regarding which kingdom you belong to - why is spiritual neutrality impossible, and what decision have you made?

The Jewish leaders violated their own laws repeatedly during Jesus' trial - when have you seen people compromise their stated values to achieve a desired outcome, and how can we guard against this?

Jesus told Pilate 'everyone who is of the truth hears my voice' - what prevents people from hearing Jesus' voice today, and how can we cultivate hearts that recognize truth?

The building expansion for children's ministry reflects the priority Jesus placed on children - why is investing in the spiritual formation of the next generation so critical to advancing God's kingdom?



Small Group Guide: "The Trials of Jesus: Two Kingdoms on Display"

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand the distinction between His kingdom and Satan's kingdom, and to help group members examine which kingdom influences their daily lives.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Have you ever been falsely accused of something or experienced betrayal? How did it make you feel? (Keep responses brief to allow time for deeper discussion)

Key Scripture References

- Matthew 12:30 - "He who is not with me is against me"
 - John 1:12 - Receiving Christ and becoming children of God
 - John 3:3-7 - Being born again
 - John 8:44 - Satan as the father of lies
 - Genesis 49:10 - Prophecy about the scepter departing from Judah
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Sermon Summary (Read aloud)

This message examined Jesus' illegal trials before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, revealing how Satan's kingdom operates versus how Jesus' kingdom operates. The trials exposed twelve characteristics of Satan's kingdom at work, ultimately showing that **Satan's kingdom is advanced by force and is always self-serving, while Jesus' kingdom is advanced by truth and is always self-sacrificing.**



Discussion Questions

Understanding the Two Kingdoms (15-20 minutes)

1. **The pastor stated, "To be undecided is to have decided."** What does this mean in terms of choosing between Satan's kingdom and Jesus' kingdom? Why is there no neutral ground?
2. **Read John 3:3-7 together.** What does it mean to be "born again"? Why is this the only way to enter Jesus' kingdom? Have you experienced this spiritual birth?
3. **The sermon contrasted how each kingdom operates:**
 - Satan's kingdom: Advanced by force, always self-serving
 - Jesus' kingdom: Advanced by truth, always self-sacrificing
4. Can you think of current examples in our world that illustrate each of these characteristics?

The Illegal Trials (15-20 minutes)

4. **The sermon outlined twelve ways Satan's kingdom put Jesus on trial.** Which of these stood out most to you and why?
 - Foregone conclusion/verdict
 - Seeking false testimony
 - Trial under cover of night
 - Trial in houses instead of proper location
 - Not all council members present
 - Forcing self-incrimination
 - No proper vote taken
 - Working around Roman law
 - Employing philosophy to deny truth ("What is truth?")
 - Yielding to political pressure despite knowing what's right
5. **Pilate declared Jesus innocent three times yet still condemned Him.** When have you witnessed (or experienced) someone knowing the truth but yielding to pressure or convenience instead? What was the cost?
6. **Jesus remained silent during much of His trial, fulfilling Isaiah 53:7.** What does Jesus' silence teach us about responding to false accusations? When should we speak and when should we remain silent?



Personal Application (15-20 minutes)

7. **The pastor said, "Have you ever been falsely accused? Have you ever been betrayed? Then you've been in direct contact with Satan's kingdom."** How does understanding the source of these attacks change how we respond to them?
 8. **Read Matthew 12:30 again: "He who is not with me is against me."** This is a challenging statement. How would you explain this to someone who says, "I'm a good person, I just haven't made a decision about Jesus yet"?
 9. **Satan whispers, "You're a good person already. You don't need to be so fanatical."** Have you heard this voice in your own life? In what situations does this temptation come most strongly?
 10. **The sermon mentioned that "just about every child that comes to our children's ministry gets saved."** What makes children more receptive to the gospel than adults? What can we learn from this?
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Key Takeaways

Write these down or share which resonates most with you:

1. There are only two kingdoms on earth: Jesus' kingdom and Satan's kingdom. Neutrality is not an option.
2. The only way to enter Jesus' kingdom is to be born again spiritually by receiving Christ (John 1:12).
3. Satan's kingdom operates through lies, force, intimidation, false accusations, and self-serving motives.
4. Jesus' kingdom operates through truth, sacrifice, love, and self-denial.
5. We can discern which kingdom is being advanced by asking: Is this being done by force or truth? Is this self-serving or self-sacrificing?
6. Even "religious" people can be operating in Satan's kingdom if they haven't been born again.



Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2 to focus on):

1. Kingdom Examination Each day this week, pause before making decisions (big or small) and ask:

- "Is this decision being driven by force or truth?"
- "Is this self-serving or self-sacrificing?"
- "Which kingdom am I advancing with this choice?"

2. Truth Assessment Identify one area where you've been believing a lie or half-truth (about yourself, God, others, or your circumstances). Write down the lie, then write the biblical truth that counters it. Memorize that truth.

3. Witness Preparation Be ready to explain to someone this week:

- What it means to be born again
- Why being a "good person" isn't enough
- How to receive Christ and become a child of God

4. Pressure Test Think of a situation where you're facing pressure to compromise truth or do something you know is wrong. Like Pilate, you may have the power to resist. Pray for courage and make a plan to stand firm this week.

5. Silence and Speech Following Jesus' example, practice discernment about when to defend yourself and when to remain silent when falsely accused or misunderstood. Pray for wisdom in each situation.

Reflection Questions for Personal Quiet Time

- Have I truly been born again, or am I relying on being a "good person"?
 - In what areas of my life am I operating more like Satan's kingdom (force, self-serving) than Jesus' kingdom (truth, self-sacrificing)?
 - Who in my life needs to hear the truth about the two kingdoms?
 - What lies have I been believing that need to be replaced with biblical truth?
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Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Share and pray for:

- Anyone in the group who may be uncertain about their salvation or need to be born again
- Situations where group members are facing pressure to compromise truth
- The church's building expansion for children's ministry
- Courage to advance Jesus' kingdom through truth and self-sacrifice this week
- People in our lives who need to hear about Jesus' kingdom

Closing Prayer Focus: Thank God for Jesus' willingness to be tried unjustly and crucified for our sins. Ask Him to help each person clearly see which kingdom they belong to and to live as citizens of Jesus' kingdom this week.

Preparation for Next Week

Continue reading through the Gospel of John, particularly chapters 18-19, noting Jesus' responses during His trials and crucifixion. Come prepared to discuss how Jesus' self-sacrifice speaks to your own walk with Him.

Additional Resources

- Sermon video/audio available online
- For more information about the building expansion or children's ministry, see the info center
- Hermeneutics class beginning February 7th with Pastor Rick (sign up via QR code)



Daily Devotional

5-Day Devotional: Two Kingdoms, One Choice

Day 1: The Verdict Was Already Made

Reading: John 11:45-53

Devotional: Before Jesus ever stood trial, the religious leaders had already decided His fate. They weren't seeking truth; they were protecting their position. How often do we approach God's Word with our minds already made up? We read Scripture looking for confirmation rather than transformation. The Pharisees saw Jesus' miracles and heard His teaching, yet their hearts remained closed. Today, examine your own heart. Are there areas where you've already rendered a verdict, refusing to let God's truth penetrate? Jesus invites us to come with open hands and humble hearts, willing to be changed by what we discover. Truth doesn't fear honest investigation—it welcomes it.

Day 2: Born Again Into a New Kingdom

Reading: John 3:1-8

Devotional: Nicodemus had everything—religious credentials, social standing, respect. Yet Jesus told him it wasn't enough. "You must be born again." No amount of good works, religious activity, or moral living can transfer us from Satan's kingdom into God's kingdom. Only a spiritual birth accomplishes this. This isn't about joining a church or signing up for membership; it's about receiving new life from God Himself. Have you experienced this spiritual birth? It's not presumptuous to know—it's the very certainty God wants you to have. When you receive Jesus, believing in His name, you become a child of God. This isn't about being a "good person"; it's about being born into God's family through faith in Christ alone.

Day 3: Silence in the Face of Lies

Reading: Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 26:59-63

Devotional: As false witnesses testified against Him and fists struck His face, Jesus remained silent. Not because He had no defense, but because He was fulfilling His mission. "As a lamb before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth." This wasn't weakness—it was strength beyond measure. Jesus held all things together, including the hands that beat Him and the mouths that accused Him. When you face false accusations or betrayal, remember Jesus understands. He experienced the worst injustice in human history. His silence wasn't defeat; it was purposeful sacrifice. Sometimes our greatest witness isn't defending ourselves but trusting God's justice while we extend His grace. Jesus' silence purchased our salvation.



Day 4: Truth Versus Force

Reading: John 18:33-38

Devotional: "What is truth?" Pilate's question echoes through our culture today. In a world where everyone claims their own truth, Jesus stands as THE truth—unchanging, absolute, eternal. Notice the contrast: Satan's kingdom advances by force and serves itself. Jesus' kingdom advances by truth and sacrifices itself. You can see this distinction everywhere. Manipulation, coercion, and deception mark one kingdom. Truth, freedom, and sacrificial love mark the other. Jesus told Pilate, "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Are you listening? In your relationships, decisions, and daily life, which kingdom's methods do you employ? When you're tempted to force your way or serve yourself, remember whose kingdom that represents. Choose truth. Choose sacrifice. Choose Jesus.

Day 5: Which Kingdom Will You Choose?

Reading: Matthew 12:30; John 12:27-32

Devotional: "He who is not with Me is against Me." Jesus leaves no middle ground. To be undecided is to have decided—you remain in the kingdom you were born into naturally, Satan's kingdom. But Jesus came to cast out the ruler of this world and draw all people to Himself. The scepter had departed from Judah, just as prophesied. Shiloh had come. In that carpenter's shop in Nazareth, Messiah was growing up, preparing to fulfill every prophecy. Now the choice stands before you. Having seen Satan's kingdom exposed—its lies, betrayals, and self-serving force—and having seen Jesus' kingdom revealed—its truth, sacrifice, and love—which will you choose? You cannot join Jesus' kingdom; you can only be born into it by receiving Him. Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart. Receive Him. Believe in His name. Become a child of God.

