



The Incredible
Journey

A CLASH OF EMPIRES

GARY KENT



**WATCH OUR PROGRAMS
ON DEMAND:**

**youtube.com/TheIncredibleJourney
www.tij.tv**

**Editors: Dorothy Pansare
Graphic Designer: Delyce Liggett**

**Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts
are from the New King James Version**

Published by The Incredible Journey

**Copyright © Eternity Media Productions Ltd.
Printed in Australia | All rights reserved**

A CLASH OF EMPIRES

In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Cassius rather boldly declares to Brutus "the fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars but in ourselves." The words were meant to spur Brutus on to join Cassius in his plot to assassinate Caesar on the Ides of March, but they also poignantly summarise the true state of the human condition.

Often times we find it easy to look outside ourselves to explain away the darker side of the human psyche, but as Cassius aptly put it "the fault lies not in our stars but in ourselves". The Bible explains to us that the human heart is the central battlefield for the greatest war ever fought in the history of the universe.

Within the confines of human thoughts and emotions, there is a continual play and counter play between two antagonistic forces that battle for mastery. The battle within our hearts is a microcosm of the greater battle being waged in the universe. The great struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil that rage around us is like a gale-force wind threatening to destroy everything in its path.

But, despite the ferocity of the conflict around us, we are not left to grope in darkness. The Bible gives us a clear view of where this conflict began, what exactly is at stake, and how we can do our part to ensure that we place ourselves on the right side of, not only this conflict, but history as well.

In order to clearly understand each of the forces engaged in this battle, it is

important to understand the kingdoms they represent and the values upon which those kingdoms have been established. In order to do this, we must first take a journey back through time to the origins of this great controversy.

The Bible describes the origins of this cosmic conflict in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 12:7 the Bible says “*And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought*”

The conflict began with war in heaven. War between two opposing armies who represented two opposing ideals. On one side of the ring was the dragon and all his hosts. Revelation 12:9 identifies the dragon as Satan, and a study of several other verses (see Jude 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:25) identifies Michael as Jesus.

The Bible tells us that this great conflict in heaven was between Christ and Satan; between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Revelation 12 goes on to describe what happens in the immediate aftermath of this clash of armies in heaven. Revelation 12:9 says, *“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”*

The Bible tells us that Satan and his host were cast out of heaven onto the earth. Why? Was our little planet nothing more than a dumping ground for Satan and his defeated army? The Bible sheds further light on this question in the book of Genesis.

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 describe in detail the creation of the world and everything

in it. After the creation of the world, God placed a single prohibition on Adam and Eve, the man and woman He created to inhabit and care for the earth. Genesis 2:16-17 describes this prohibition in these words *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

God explained to Adam and Eve that they were not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that had been placed in the center of the garden. Genesis 3:1-6 describes to us what happens after God places this single, simple prohibition on Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:1 says *“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed*

said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

This seemingly innocent question planted a seed of doubt in Eve's mind, tempting her to question God's goodness and love. Satan continued to break down Eve's trust in God's word until finally, he declares in Genesis 3:4-5 *"You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Satan boldly declared to Eve that God was lying and could not be trusted. Believing Satan's lies and choosing to doubt God's word, Eve ate the forbidden fruit and then became Satan's agent in leading her husband to do the same. The consequences of that fateful day still reverberate today, for in choosing to disobey God and follow Satan's suggestion, Adam and Eve chose to accept him as their overlord. In so doing

they gave him permission to establish his kingdom here on planet earth.

But God, in His goodness, did not leave us at Satan's mercy. Knowing and understanding the repercussions of pledging allegiance to Satan and his ideals, God stepped in and offered Adam and Eve, and indeed the entire human race, a way out. In Genesis 3:15 the Bible says "*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shalt bruise his heel*".

Encapsulated in this single verse of Scripture is the entire plan of Salvation. Through the promised Seed, Jesus, the power of the serpent, Satan, would be crushed, giving hope to all those who wanted a way out of Satan's kingdom.

But what exactly is Satan's kingdom like? What principles is it built upon? And perhaps more importantly in what ways does it differ from the kingdom of God?

Isaiah 14:12-14 describes to us the principles that underpin the kingdom of Satan. Speaking of Satan's fall from heaven, the Bible says *"How you are fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."*

This passage in Isaiah lays bare the deepest desires of Satan's heart, and by extension his most cherished ideals for the building

up of his kingdom. The entire focus of Satan's empire is selfishness which is manifested in a variety of different forms which include greed, ambition, self-exaltation, and an unabated hunger for power and total domination. In fact, the characteristics of Satan's kingdom bear a marked resemblance to many of the great world empires that have strutted on the stage of history.

But what about the kingdom of God? The war in heaven which was fought between Christ and Satan was as much a clash of ideologies as it was a clash of armies. As much a conflict of values as it was a conflict of wills. So if the kingdom of Satan is marked by total self-absorption, then what is the kingdom of God built on?

The Bible answers this question in Philippians 2:5-8. There Paul the apostle writes,

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross”.

The Bible tells us that the kingdom of God is based on principles that are diametrically opposed to the principles of the kingdom of Satan. Whereas Satan desires to be like God and to wield total power, Jesus, being in the form of God, gladly gave it up in order to become a man, and not just a man but a servant, and not just a servant but a sacrifice as well.

God’s kingdom is built on the principle of self-sacrificing love. In fact, this is

the very nature and essence of who God is. The apostle John summarises this beautifully in 1 John 4:8 where he says *“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love”* Did you catch that? God is love. God is the total embodiment of self-sacrificing love. The kind of love that was willing to leave the glory of heaven in order to take on the role of a servant and sacrifice on behalf of men and women who did not know Him or love Him.

So let's take a closer look at the attributes of these two kingdoms. We know the ideologies of their leaders, but how do those ideologies play out in the building of an empire and in the ruling of the subjects in their care?

Well, one of the closest examples of an empire built on the ideology of self-absorption and self-interest

is Rome. In every way, Rome was the epitome of undiluted power and unmitigated dominance.

Rome began as a collection of small settlements scattered over the seven hills where the city now stands. In time these settlements merged into a single metropolis that became Rome. In its long and varied history, Rome was always known for its wild pursuit of opulence and pleasure. In fact, hedonism was one of the hallmarks of the Roman mindset. Romans loved grand buildings, luxurious living, and the pursuit of pleasure for the sake of pleasure. Now there is nothing inherently wrong with living well or having a good time but the Roman mindset was so fixed on the gratification of self that the rich frequently oppressed the poor and the social gap between the various classes was so wide that it was rarely breached.

While the rich feasted the poor struggled to eke out a living. Not only this, but with opulence came vice. Rome was a place where all manner of immorality was not only practiced but encouraged. The mindset of Rome was most clearly seen in the lives of the political elite and later the Caesars.

One of the most tragic examples of the Roman mindset is seen in the sad tale of Julius Caesar. Caesar began his career as a statesman and general in the Roman army during the glory days of the Roman republic. But Caesar was ambitious. As governor of Gaul, he slowly began amassing support and conquering more ground until, horrified at his growing power the Senate ordered Caesar to step down from his military command and return to Rome.

Unwilling to relinquish his power Caesar defied the authority of the Senate, crossed the Rubicon River, which in many ways was a point of no return, and marched into Rome. What ensued is known today as Caesar's civil war, and in the aftermath Julius Caesar had undisputed power and influence over Rome. After some fancy political footwork, he managed to proclaim himself dictator for life, thus seizing control of the republic. But his greed and ambition only spurred the senate to retaliate.

Incensed by his arrogance, a group of senators conspired to assassinate Caesar. Chief among the group were two of his closest friends, Brutus and Cassius. On the Ides of March, (March 15th) 44 BC when Caesar arrived at the Senate for a meeting, he was surrounded by 60 senators who stabbed him 23 times.

The assassination of Caesar was one of the bloodiest acts of betrayal in history, and highlighted the terrible depths to which greed and a hankering after power can lead: Ultimate power. But so did those who surrounded him, and the result was something akin to cannibalism. A terribly grim picture of what survival of the fittest looks like within the human realm.

These are the ideologies that make up the kingdom of Satan: greed, avarice, lust for power, pride, and ultimately murder and betrayal. All of this comes from setting aside the Word of God and choosing to follow in the paths of Satan. All of this comes from choosing selfishness over self-sacrificing love.

But what is the kingdom of God like? In the gospels, Jesus told several parables that revealed the principles of the kingdom

of God. Each of these parables began with the words “*the kingdom of heaven is like...*” and went on to describe different aspects of God’s heavenly empire.

As important as all of these parables are, we will look at three particularly significant ones in this booklet. These three parables help us to understand how we can become citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and in doing so reveal to us just how diametrically opposed are the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God.

Interestingly Jesus expounded on the principles of God’s kingdom while He was part of the shadow empire that Satan had set up. Jesus lived under the rule of the Roman empire, but He challenged the values that kingdom was built upon and offered a set of values that would give people the freedom they longed for. The

values that kingdom was built upon offer all those who chose to follow them the freedom they longed for.

So let's have a look at three of Jesus' most significant kingdom parables and the principles they encapsulate.

#1 A KINGDOM OF GRACE

In Matthew 20:1-16 Jesus tells the parable of a householder who went out one morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. Beginning the parable with the familiar words "*for the kingdom of heaven is like...*" Jesus goes on to describe how the man goes about hiring his labourers. Finding them in the vineyard at the very beginning of the workday, the owner of the vineyard negotiates a fair price for a day's work and sends them into his field.

As the day wears on the owner of the vineyard makes repeated trips to the marketplace in search of more workers. He doesn't look for men who are particularly skilled. He is just interested in men who are willing and able to work.

Finally, with only an hour left in the workday, the owner goes out to the marketplace once more and hires another passel of workers. Interestingly, he offers all the workers the same pay regardless of how long they have worked.

When the workday is completed the owner of the vineyard instructs his steward to line up the workers to receive their pay. He tells him to put those who came last at the head of the line, and those who came at the very beginning of the workday at the back of the line.

Once they are lined up they all receive the same wages. This rankles the

labourers who worked for the entire day. Approaching the owner they say “*These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day*” (Matthew 20:12)

It seemed like a fair accusation. After all, the men who came at the beginning of the day had worked the longest and the hardest while those who had sauntered in at the eleventh hour had not even broken a sweat. It seemed, in the spirit of meritocracy, that those who had worked longest and hardest should be paid more than those who had not.

But the landowner’s response is startling. Kindly but firmly he turns to the disgruntled workers and says “*Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go*

your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?"
(Matthew 20:13-15)

The owner of the vineyard reveals to the disgruntled workers that their wages are not the result of their hard work but rather his generosity. He points out, gently, that the entire vineyard is his, the money it has generated is his, and he was under no obligation to hire them. And regardless of how much they worked, their wages were a result of his grace.

This is what the kingdom of God is like. Ephesians 2:8-9 says *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* God's kingdom is a kingdom of grace. We are given citizenship not because we are worthy, not because we deserve

it, not because we have worked for it, but because God has chosen to pour His undeserved favour on us.

The kingdom of Rome was a kingdom of hierarchy, meritocracy, and power. It was a kingdom that operated upon the principle of survival of the fittest. To the winner belonged the spoils and the victor was always the fastest, strongest, and most well equipped. But the kingdom of God is not like this.

The kingdom of God is not based on this principle. Jeremiah 9:23-24 says *“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord”*.

The kingdom of God is not based on strength or superiority of intellect. It is not based on human achievement or accomplishment. It is based on the grace of God. We do not earn our place in heaven. We accept it as a free gift, made available to us through the agency of God's grace and nothing else.

#2 A KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The kingdom of heaven is not only a kingdom of grace but also a kingdom of righteousness. Psalms 119:172 gives us the definition of righteousness. The verse says, *“My tongue shall speak of your word: for all your commandments are righteousness”*.

God's righteousness is embodied in His commandments and in order to truly experience the righteousness of God, we

must embrace His commandments. Paul points out the fact that the end goal of the gospel is righteousness. In Romans 1:16-17, the apostle writes *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith”*.

The gospel, which comes to us by grace through faith, reveals the righteousness of God in us. How can this be? Jesus explains this in one of His parables. In Matthew 22:2-14 Jesus tells the parable of a man who organises his son’s wedding. Excited at the prospect of the impending nuptials and wanting to invite all his friends to the feast, the man sends his invitations near and far.

His first round of invitations is rejected and he sends out a second round, ultimately managing to round up a decent-sized group of people for the wedding reception. While he is making the rounds, speaking to the guests, and accepting their well wishes, he comes upon a guest who is not wearing a wedding garment.

The host said *“Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?”* The guest in question is speechless and the host wastes no time in escorting the man outside.

This parable reveals several important points. First, access to God’s wedding feast is by invitation only and Jesus has already extended that invitation to everyone. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, *“come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* and in John 7:37 Jesus cried out *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink”*.

We have all received the invitation to the great marriage of the heavenly bridegroom, Jesus Christ. The question is, are we willing to accept it?

Secondly, this parable points out that in order to gain access to the wedding supper we need to have a wedding garment. What is this wedding garment? Speaking of this same marriage supper, but in the context of the second coming of Jesus and the great heavenly reunion between Jesus and His people, the apostle John gives us an idea of what this wedding garment is. In Revelation 19:8 the Bible tells us “*And to her (God’s people, the bride of Jesus) to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*”.

There again is that word *righteousness*. In fact, we are told that the wedding garment is the righteousness of the saints and the

only way that we can obtain righteousness is through Jesus. The Bible tells us in Isaiah 64:6 *“but we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags”*.

The wedding garment is the righteousness of Jesus and it is this that we need in order to gain access to heaven. So how can I obtain the righteousness of Jesus? Galatians 3:27 says *“for as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ”*.

When we choose to give our lives to Jesus we put Him on, like a garment, like a robe, and from that moment forward we commit our lives fully and completely to Him. The apostle Paul describes this union of our souls with Jesus in Galatians 2:20 where he says *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the*

life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”.

When we give our lives to Jesus He begins to live His life through us. In every decision we make we choose to yield our hearts and minds, our thoughts and actions to Him so that pretty soon it is no longer us who are living, but Jesus living and working in us.

This is the beauty of the kingdom of God. It is a kingdom of grace, that offers us undeserved kindness, but it is also a kingdom of righteousness that offers us a complete transformation of heart and life through Jesus.

#3 A KINGDOM OF GLORY

Finally, the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of glory. A tangible reality that will soon come to pass at Jesus' second

coming. Speaking about that glorious event in Matthew 25:31, Jesus says *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory”*

Echoing this sentiment the prophet Daniel, looking down through the ages to the end of time, says in Daniel 7:27 *“And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him”*.

The Bible tells us that while earthly kingdoms will rise and fall and dictators and despots grace the world’s stage, only one kingdom will prevail and that is the Kingdom of God. Isn’t that good news?

But the even better news is the fact that God’s kingdom will be populated by

those who have chosen to wholeheartedly commit their lives to Jesus. Jesus extends His invitation to every single human being on the planet to come to Him, so that through His grace and righteousness we may all have a place in His glorious eternal kingdom.

For all her might and splendour the Roman empire is no more. Every successive despot who has swept onto the world's stage from Charlemagne to Napoleon to Hitler has tried to establish kingdoms of their own making, kingdoms in their own image, and the result has been war and suffering and death.

But Jesus promises us a kingdom of peace that will last through eternity. A kingdom that can even now begin in our hearts if we give Him permission to come and make His home there. A kingdom that is real and tangible and coming soon – very soon.

In the clash between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God, we each have a choice. A voice and a vote. We can choose to cast our ballot on the side of God or on the side of Satan. We get to make that choice. May we each choose wisely with eternity in view.

BIBLE STUDIES

THAT COULD
CHANGE YOUR LIFE

FOREVER!

- God: What is He like?
- If God is good— why is there evil?
- God's dietary plan
- How to Pray
- Steps to Heaven
- Personal Peace
- Heaven
- Discouragement



To request these Bible Studies:

Website: www.tij.tv

[Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry)

Australia

0481 315 101

info@tij.tv

The Incredible Journey
GPO Box 274
Sydney NSW 2001

New Zealand

020 422 2042

infonz@tij.tv

The Incredible Journey
PO Box 76673
Manukau, Auckland 2241

When Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon River, he guaranteed that Rome would never be the same again. It was one of the most definitive moments in history, a point of no return which transformed the empire and the entire world. But when Rome was at its zenith, it became the cradle of yet another definitive historical moment. Take a journey through the Bible and history to uncover the greatest clash of kingdoms the world has ever seen.



Pastor Gary Kent is Speaker for The Incredible Journey ministry. He has produced and presented numerous documentaries on subjects including the Bible, Bible prophecy, world events and natural health. His passion is to share the good news of Jesus' imminent return.

The Incredible Journey

Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry

Website: www.tij.tv

Australia
0481 315 101
info@tij.tv

New Zealand
020 422 2042
infonz@tij.tv



The Incredible
Journey