

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**
Chapter 11- Luke 11:14-28
216- Jesus Attacked

August 25, 2013

Luke 11:14-28

14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed.

15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

16 Others, to test *Him*, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

17 But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "**Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls.**

18 "**If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.**

19 "**And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.**

20 "**But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

21 "**When a strong *man*, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.**

22 "**But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.**

23 "**He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.**

24 "**When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'**

25 "**And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.**

26 "Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."

28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

To the Glory of God

Now this Passage is really about only one thing- Jesus Christ. And that is exactly what the entire Bible is about. Basically the OT is all about the *Promise* of the Messiah's coming and the NT is all about the *fulfillment* of that coming and what that means to us.

So everything in the 66 Books of the Bible is about Jesus- either in His sinless Life as God in human flesh, His vicarious or His substitutionary Death, and His Powerful and Miraculous Resurrection. And so Salvation is trusting the Biblical Record about those events and what they mean.

And so it is the preaching of the Gospel that is paramount to the Salvation of souls. Because nobody is saved unless and until they hear the Gospel and believe the Gospel- which is the Good News that wicked sinners can be rescued from the Wrath of God- not by their obedience to the Law- but through admitting that they are helpless and hopeless and of trusting in what Jesus did for them.

Christianity is the only religion in the history of the world that says, "Done!" Every other religion or human philosophy says, "Do!" You must do this or you must do that in order to gain God's Favor so that He may allow you entrance into Heaven. But Biblical Christianity says "Done". What we *cannot* do- Jesus did. What we are *unable* to do- Jesus did.

So we are saved- not by doing something- but by trusting in Someone. We are not saved by accomplishing certain religious rules- but by confessing our own inherent wickedness and by trusting in the Sinlessness and the Obedience and the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Favor of God that is for us, the Love of God that is toward us, the Special Treatment of God that is shown to us in violating our will that is naturally and normally inclined to run away from God and that seeks us out and that chases us down and that literally and forcefully drags us to Jesus- that Divine Favor, that Supernatural Love, that Miraculous Special Treatment that opens our blind eyes and that unstops our deaf ears and that takes out of us a stony heart and gives us a heart of flesh- even though we don't want it or ask for it- is called, "Grace".

So we see that Grace is not the dainty, delicate, or fragile commodity that has been portrayed by the modern Church but is, in fact, a very powerful, violent, and invincible Gift of God that effectually saves those whom God has chosen completely- or to the uttermost.

So we do not enter into Heaven because we can produce some evidence of our obedience or our righteousness. We enter into Heaven precisely because we trust in the Lord Jesus and Who He is and what He has done and in that alone.

Therefore- because all of that is true- whatever you may believe, whatever you may think, or whatever you may imagine to be your options- everyone in the world falls into one of two categories- and there are only two categories- there are not three or more. There are only two options- and everybody fits into one of the two options that Jesus Himself spoke in verse 23:

He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

... that is it. You are either *with* Christ or make no mistake about it- you are *against* Him. You either are with Him and you are contributing *to* His Kingdom- or you are *against* Jesus and you are fighting *against* His Kingdom. There is no such thing as anybody being neutral towards Jesus. He will not allow anyone to be neutral. Nobody is on the sidelines; nobody is in the dock trying to decide.

Everyone in the world lives and dies in one of those two categories. And your eternal destiny is determined by which of the two you are in. So that is why I tell you that after you boil everything down- even though- technically- there are over 8,000 different religions and

human philosophies that govern people's lives- there are really only two:

1. Biblical Christianity
2. Everything Else

There are those who are *with* Christ and those who are *against* Him. There are those who are God's and those who are Satan's. There are those who are in the Kingdom of Light, and those who are in the kingdom of darkness. There are those who are children of God and those who are children of the devil. There are those who are fish on the left side and those who are fish on the right. There are those who are wheat and those who are tares. There are those who are sheep and those who are goats. There are those who are unrighteous and those who are righteous. There are those who are on their way to heaven and there are those who are running into hell as fast as they can.

And this is unmistakable. This is clear and it is precise and it is definitive and this is determinative and this is undeniable. And this leaves absolutely no one out. There is no such thing as *anybody* straddling the fence; nobody is standing on the sidelines; nobody is neutral. Nobody. For anyone to attempt to straddle the fence- means by default that you are *not* with the Lord and therefore- you are against Him.

And way back in Chapter 9:50 Jesus said the very same thing to His disciples when He said,

He who is not against you is for you

So there are only two options in the world. You are either supportive of the Messiah and supportive of His Work and His Kingdom and you are loving Him and you are enjoying Him and you are personally contributing to His Work in the earth or you are against Him and you are fighting against His Kingdom.

There is no middle ground. There is no third option. There is no other category. There is no neutrality. God is not wringing His Hands trying to figure out what to do with the people who are neither for Christ or against Him. God is not in a dilemma with all those who supposedly are in this huge middle group- who on the one hand didn't

know about Jesus or on the other hand knew about Him but didn't know what to do so they did nothing. To not know about Jesus or to reject Jesus is to be against Him.

There is no such middle ground. 100% of those who are saved are actively loving and serving Jesus Christ and 100% of those who are lost are fighting against Him. Those who don't know about Jesus are lost and they are children of satan and they are actively and willingly fighting against Him. And those who are saved are actively and willingly loving and serving Him.

And those who do not love and serve Jesus Christ are not saved because being saved means that God has given you a new heart and a new mind and a new nature and loving and serving God is what results from that miraculous and supernatural transformation.

So what I am trying to stress to you today is that there is no possibility of anyone ever being neutral about Jesus. There is no third option. In the ongoing war between God and satan; between Good and Evil; between Light and Darkness; between Truth and Lies; between that which is Holy and that which is Profane; between pleasing God and offending God; between loving God and hating God; between enjoying God and tolerating God- there is no middle ground; there is no Purgatory; there is no resting place to sort things out after death; there is no "soul sleep".

There is only Heaven and Hell; there is only eternal joy and eternal damnation; there is only everlasting life and there is everlasting punishment; there is only joy unspeakable and full of Glory and there is horror beyond imagination; there is being in the very Presence of God for all eternity with no filters and no barriers and no end or there is tormenting flames burning with brimstone with the devil and his angels where the smoke of their torment rises forever.

And so because these stakes are so high, because there is nothing on this earth that is more serious or more important or more real than where you are going to spend eternity- there is absolutely no room in the pulpits of the Church of Jesus for foolishness, no time for silly slapstick comedy routines, no time for shallow surface programs that tickle the carnal whims of lukewarm or backslid or unsaved church members, no space for ridiculous slogans or catchy phrases or cute little quotes that do not bring home, and make real the fierce reality of the Wrath of an infinitely Holy God that is bearing down against all sin and

all unrepentant sinners like a freight train running at 300 miles an hour.

The very best way for you to be strong in the Lord and the Power of His might is for you to rise up off your double wide and to attend the Church Services and to dig deep into God's Word with your brothers and sisters and to pray without ceasing with your brothers and sisters and to fellowship with your brothers and sisters who are doing the same things.

The very best way for you to be weak and ineffectual in your walk with God- the very best way for you to waste your life- is for you to hang out of Church and to go your own way do your own thing and separate yourself from the Body- all while claiming to be led of the Lord.

If you believe the Bible at all- if you see that the Coming of the Lord is near- then you must also agree that before Jesus comes- there will be a great falling away- a time of great compromise and great deception where- because iniquity will abound- the love of many will wax cold.

So do not allow your love of God and your love of prayer and your love of Bible Study and your love of each other to wax cold. You have made a covenant with each other. Do not allow your love for Jesus and your hunger for Righteousness and your pursuit of holiness and your "business" in the Work of the Lord and in His Kingdom to wax cold.

Do not allow the lust of the eye and the pride of life and the deceitfulness of riches to blind you and to deceive you and to carry you far away so that you cannot see and you lose the desire to be with your brothers and sisters in Church.

There are people in the jail and in the schools and on the streets and in the shopping malls and at the park and in businesses and in your neighborhood who need to hear the Gospel. And these people need to see with their eyes- people just like you- who are struggling against the lusts of their flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to humbly and joyfully submit to the Authority of Scripture in their daily lives- all to the Glory of God so as to give credibility to the Gospel that we preach.

The world needs to see godly husbands loving and leading their families. They need to see godly wives joyfully submitting to the authority of their husbands and of making their homes the main sphere of their influence. They need to see children in humble and joyful

submission to the authority of their parents; they need to see employees working diligently on the job and being dependable and reliable.

Old men in the Church should lead by example and older ladies should teach the younger ones how to love their husbands and love their children and to keep home. And young men should sit at the feet of a godly older man and glean everything they can from him so that they may walk this world in white.

And we are to do this for three very important reasons:

- 1. So that the Word of God will not be dishonored. (Titus 2:5)**
- 2. So that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:8)**
- 3. So that they will adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. (Titus 2:10)**

Now I didn't set it up like this- Jesus did. I'm not the One Who told you not to forsake the assembly of yourselves together- Jesus is. I'm not the one who called you to be a part of this Church- you told me that Jesus did.

Therefore- we who lead in the Church must be consumed by the urgency of the moment- that today is the day of Salvation and that Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth- not as the mild Nazarene- but as the all- conquering King- Who will come back- not to bring Mercy and Grace to a sleeping world- but Who is coming with Eyes that burn like flames of fire to enact God's Vengeance against all sin by utterly vanquishing all unrepentant sinners until the blood runs up the horses bridle.

So as we stand in the pulpit- we need to strain real hard to hear- on the one hand- the unimaginable rejoicing of those who are in Heaven, in the very presence of the King who have finally escaped this world to live forever with Jesus, and we need to plead with tears to all who have ears to hear that you do whatever you need to do to not miss that.

And on the other hand- we need to hear very clearly the screams of those who live every moment of every day in unfathomable pain and torment in a lake of fire and to plead with tears to all who have an ear to hear that you do whatever you need to do to miss that. And so in the words of the Apostle Paul in **2Corinthians 5:11a:**

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...

So we need to preach the Gospel; we need to take every opportunity that is afforded us to sow the seed of God's Holy Word into the lives of as many people as we can everyday- because the Gospel is the only Commodity that God created that is used by God the Holy Spirit to save the souls of the lost.

And that is why I am on the radio and on the internet and why we are in the jails and in the nursing homes and that is why I implore all of you- every one of you- to not waste your life- but to conduct Bible studies in your homes and invite your neighbors and to go to Barnes and Nobles and strike up conversations and visit the skating rinks on Friday evenings and wherever there is a crowd and pass out tracts on the street and to see to it that you are busy in the Work of the Lord.

Is it exhausting work? Yes. Is it time consuming? Yes. Will it interrupt your plans? Yes. Will it inconvenience you? You bet. But it is what God has called us to do as believers and it is the very best expression of true godly love to other people that we could ever make- far exceeding feeding or clothing or housing them.

I am invited nearly every week to participate in some youth rally or some activity designed to entertain young people and then slip in some watered down gospel presentation at the end. And for 42 years now- I have believed all of that to be an utter waste of time. I thought it was unbiblical when I was 16 years old and freshly born again and I think it is unbiblical as a 58 year old man.

The very best thing we can teach our young people is the weightiness and the seriousness and the exhausting demands of the Gospel. To see young people agonizing over sin in their lives and to see them fast and pray and to see them go and preach is truly a wonder to behold. Because in devoting yourself to that- there is joy unspeakable.

So young people should be busy in the nursing homes and in the jails and on the streets and in emptying bed pans for the aged and in mowing yards for the sick and in feeding the hungry and learning how to give rather than to receive, learning how to sacrifice rather than obtain, and in learning how to labor rather than play.

We need to understand, dear friends, that the person who does not believe in Jesus Christ and who does not follow Christ with all his heart and who does not join in the building of Christ's Kingdom is in direct

partnership with satan as much as if he were a satan worshiper. It is not necessary to oppose Jesus Christ to be against Him. It is not necessary to attack His Deity. It is not necessary to attack His Word. It is not necessary to attack His Character. It is not necessary to attack His Gospel. It is not necessary to discredit His Church. It is not necessary to persecute Christians. It is not necessary to interfere in His Work or to slander His Name, or to hate His Kingdom.

All you have to do is to do nothing about Jesus Christ and you're already in the very same category with satan worshipers. In fact you are one. To decide to do nothing about Jesus is to decide against Him. If you are not actively involved in the Work of gathering souls into the Kingdom of God- then you are guilty of participating with those who scatter them. No decision concerning Jesus Christ is a decision against Him. No participation with Christ is to be against Him and against His Work and against His Word and against His Kingdom. Just know that.

So don't you ever try to comfort yourself that you're sitting in some neutral spot with warm and fuzzy feelings about Jesus while not loving and serving and struggling to obey Him. That place is a fantasy and doesn't exist. In reality- that warm and fuzzy and neutral place that loves to talk about the baby Jesus in a manger but categorically rejects the adult Jesus and His Words will damn you just as fast as if you bowed down to a satanic shrine and engaged in human sacrifice.

All people are either Christ's or satan's and there are absolutely no exceptions- Jesus said this- not me. And this is crystalized in the inspired and inerrant Words of the Lord Jesus Himself in verse 23.

Now as we learned in Chapter 9:51- Jesus resolutely set His Face to go to Jerusalem where He would die. So at this point in His Ministry- Jesus is heading very rapidly toward His death- which is only months away from this moment.

Now it will take us longer than a few months to get there in our Journey because there is so much Teaching that Jesus will do between now and then. But at this point- His Galilean Ministry is over and during these final few months- He and the Twelve Apostles and the seventy and the rest of His disciples are hitting every town and village on the way to Jerusalem- proclaiming His Messiahship and affirming the reality of His Deity through preaching and teaching and confirming the Word preached with supernatural signs and wonders and miracles and physical healings and by casting out demons.

Their days are filled with miracles and teachings and an ongoing Call for repentance and faith in Jesus as the Messiah. And Jesus puts His Divine Power on display and He even delegated it through the Apostles and the seventy so that as they went out- they had power over demons which had been delegated to them for this period of time. And through His Presence and through His Preaching and His Healings and His Power and Authority over demons and organic diseases and nature itself- Jesus is bringing the Power and the Glory and the Authority of the Kingdom of God into those little towns and villages throughout Judea. And the people are being confronted with the reality of Who Jesus is. And they're being confronted with the issue of

What are you going to do with Jesus Christ?

... and as I have said- you only have two options. You are either *with* Him or you are *against* Him and there is no middle ground.

Now it is important to understand that up to this point- Dr. Luke has been presenting the Record of the Revelation of the Son of God. It starts out early in Luke- when an angelic announcement comes to Zacharias and then Elizabeth finds out they're going to have a child in their old age- who will be the forerunner of the Messiah.

Then another angelic announcement comes to Mary and she's going to birth the Messiah as a virgin. And all of this is unmistakable evidence.

And so now Luke is at a point where nothing more can be said. Nothing more needs to be done. The facts are all in and the evidence has all been submitted. And you will begin to notice that after you move through chapter 11- Jesus will get even more confrontational than ever before. He elevates His response to the people in a more combative and condemning level. And that is done on purpose to remove all neutrality; to shake the fence until there are no more fence sitters and everyone is either following Him or running away; they are either proclaiming Him or denying Him; they are either actively loving Him or hating Him; they are either surrendering totally to Him or they are purposefully rebelling against Him.

And this division, this difference, this separation is the result of the Kingdom of God being manifest to them. You see, every single time God's Kingdom is manifested- this division occurs. Every single time

Jesus is proved, every time Jesus is made clear, every time Jesus is revealed and unveiled in His Glory, every single time people begin to really understand Jesus in all His Glory and in His Deity and in His Power and in His Expectations and in His Demands and in His Restrictions on our lives- this division and this separation occurs.

So until the Kingdom comes- people sit on the fence and they love Jesus at a distance- on their own terms and in their own way. Until the Kingdom is manifested- people feel comfortable with tipping the Lord for a few minutes on Sunday Morning while they feel perfectly entitled to continue to live their lives according to the dictates of their hearts the rest of the week. Until God's Kingdom is made clear- there is no urgency, no weightiness, no heaviness, no seriousness on the condition of our minds and hearts and lives.

And the tragic reality is that the people in this Passage concluded the exact opposite of the Truth about Jesus and the result of them coming to the wrong conclusion is that they are all separated and removed. So what did they conclude about Jesus after all the miracles, all the healings, all the teachings, all the mighty signs and wonders? Look again at **Luke 11:15b**:

... He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.

.. which is just another way of saying that Jesus is from hell and not from heaven. This is saying that Jesus represents satan and not God; that He is a liar and not the Truth; that He is the source of death and not life; that He is from the darkness and of the darkness and not the Light.

And all of this hostility toward Jesus was created because the Power and Glory of the Kingdom of God was made manifest to them.

Now in verses 1-13- we have just been instructed by the Lord on how to pray and in Levi's Account over in **Matthew 6**- Jesus told us to pray that God's Kingdom would come. So here is Jesus demonstrating the Kingdom and yet it causes such terrible results.

But if the Kingdom of God is so wonderful- then why did the manifesting of it cause such turmoil? Why did it set the people on edge like this? Why did manifesting God's Kingdom result in so many people blaspheming Jesus?

The answer has to do with not only Who Jesus is and what Jesus came to do- but with the very concept of the Kingdom of God itself. And so I want to get into this with you for awhile and explore just what the Kingdom of God is and what it means for us.

Now first of all- the New Testament pictures all of history in just two Ages:

- A. This present Age with its sin and misery and satanic power
- B. The Age that is to come with perfect Righteousness and Wholeness and Freedom and everlasting Joy.

And the mystery of the Kingdom of God is that these two Ages have intersected with the first coming of Jesus. They now overlap. The Age that is to come has- in one sense- already begun while the present fallen Age endures for a time.

So we do not live *in between* the Ages as is commonly thought- but we, who occupy on the earth since the Resurrection of Jesus, actually live in both Ages. Here are some interesting facts about where we live:

- ✓ We have already tasted the "**powers of the age to come**" (**Hebrews 6:5**) yet we continue to suffer with continual fleshly failure and sin.
- ✓ We know that Christ already purchased our healing (**Matthew 8:17**), yet we still groan with sickness (**Romans 8:23; 2Corinthians 4:16**).
- ✓ We have already passed from death to life (**1John 3:14**), but we still die (**1Corinthians 15:26**).
- ✓ We already have the sanctifying Spirit as a down payment of our inheritance (**Ephesians 1:14**), but the war between flesh and Spirit goes on every day (**Galatians 5:16–18**).
- ✓ We have already been acquitted of all sin in Christ (**Romans 5:1**), but must go on every day praying, "**forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us**" (**Matthew 6:12**).
- ✓ We already have our citizenship in the kingdom of God (**Philippians 3:20**), but for now must still submit in measure to the rulers of this world (**Romans 13:1**).
- ✓ We are already absolutely and eternally sanctified yet we are being progressively sanctified day by day.

So in a word- every blessing of the Age that is to come at some point in the future- is already ours in Jesus Christ by faith (**Ephesians 1:3**). Yet God wills for us to come into our inheritance *patiently through many tribulations*. For example- according to **The Acts 14:21& 22** the Apostle Paul taught all his new believers,

The Acts 14:21&22

21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

.. which is God's "way" or "means" of making us- in the words of **2Thessalonians 1:5**- "fit for the kingdom of God".

So just how is the Kingdom of God present? In what sense is it with us now? If the Kingdom has come in Jesus- what is the Power of the Kingdom doing? But as we ask these questions- we must be careful even how we ask them. Because it is one thing to ask:

How was the Kingdom present in the Life and Ministry of Jesus?

...but it is quite another to ask

How is the Kingdom present with us today?

So if we are to understand this great mystery Biblically- we have to begin with this one foundational fact:

Jesus Christ was the physical embodiment of the Kingdom of God

Jesus was and is the King. And His demonstration of the Kingdom- in Who He is and What He did while He was here on earth was- in every way- unique. It was special. Nothing was ever like it before and nothing will ever be like it since. Jesus and His Ministry was a one-of-a-kind Ministry. And that is true so that all Glory and all

Praise and all Honor may go to the Son and not to us. So for example- when the Apostle John wrote in **John 14:12** and said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

... John did not mean to say that the works we would do would be greater in *importance* than what Jesus did- but only greater in *scope*- in that the Christian Church will be able to reach more people with the Gospel and with the Message of God's Kingdom and will affect more lives for Good with Truth and Salvation and the Forgiveness of sin than Jesus did when He was here on the earth.

None one will ever be greater than Jesus- no one. It is blasphemy to suggest that human beings can or even could be equal or superior in importance to Jesus Christ. Mormons and New Agers teach that- but not Christians. And we also need to know that no one will ever do anything greater in *importance* than what Jesus did. There is absolutely no context and no reason within the framework of the text of **John 14** to even suggest that Jesus was talking about us doing more important things than He did or that anyone of us would ever be greater than Jesus in importance. That false teaching is simply something that some within the modern Church have invented to build up their own importance and their own standing with weak and impressionable souls.

So while believers today may do the same *kinds of* works that Jesus did- there will always remain a special uniqueness about the way that Jesus did them. So we should never assume that our demonstration of the Kingdom and Jesus' demonstration of the Kingdom will ever be the same- because they are not.

For example, when Jesus turned the water into wine- John says,

John 2:11

This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

... and the glory John tells us in **John 1:14** is the Glory as of the

“One and Only of the Father.”

Therefore it is sinful and wrong to say that the signs and wonders wrought by Jesus are simply the Work of a Spirit-filled Man and that if we are Spirit filled too- we can copy them and do them as well. No, the Apostle John was crystal clear that when Jesus demonstrated Kingdom Power- He did it in a way that manifested His Glory as being the unique and special and one and only Son of God- not just a saved man and not just a Spirit- filled man.

In my study of God the Holy Spirit- I have found that there are many, many concepts that are being peddled as “new revelations” by the pied pipers in the Full Gospel, Pentecostal, and Charismatic world today and that have sadly spilled over into mainstream churches that are in fact not new at all- but are ancient blasphemous heresies that the Christian Church confronted and defeated many centuries ago. But because most people today are ignorant of God’s Word and are ignorant of Church History- they don’t know this.

So what we must realize is that there was an inseparable connection between the signs of Jesus in manifesting the Kingdom of God and the glorious Sonship of Jesus.

Another example comes from **John 5:36b** where Jesus said,

... the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.

So there was something about the Works of Jesus or the way He did them that didn’t just “wow” the people with cool tricks- or testify that Jesus was filled with the Spirit- or even had the physical healing and deliverance of the people as their main objective- but they pointed to Jesus Christ as being the only Son of God sent from the Father.

Another example is the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus' explanation to Martha of what was about to happen was not,

"I am full of the Spirit and anyone else who is filled with the Spirit can do the same thing I do."

... no, His explanation was,

John 11:25b&26a

25 ... "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die...

So Lazarus' resurrection was not merely a sign of a human being who was in tune with the Power of God. And the focus was not even on Lazarus being made alive again. It was an unmistakable sign that Jesus was the one and only Son of God- the One with death-overcoming Power- Who Alone can save our sinful souls. So the sign was all about Jesus and Who He is. And to prove that- just before Jesus calls Lazarus from the grave- He prays out loud to His Father and says,

John 11:41-42

41 ...Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

42 I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.

Notice carefully that Jesus did not say,

That they may believe that I am full of the Spirit, or that My Words are true, or that the kingdom has come"

.. BUT:

so that they may believe that You sent Me.

So I say again- we should never assume that our demonstration of the Kingdom today and Jesus' demonstration of the Kingdom in His Ministry will ever be the same. In fact I wonder if we should not, in fact, glory in our *inability* to physically heal people the way Jesus healed them and in our *inability* to perform miracles the way Jesus did- in order to exalt His absolute uniqueness as THE Son from the Father- while we admit our imperfections as grace- adopted sons on the way to the Father.

So just how is the Kingdom present? Or what blessings did the arrival of the Kingdom bring? I am going to mention several powerful effects of the Kingdom of God.

1. In Relation to Death and Resurrection

The Kingdom of God overcomes death and brings resurrection. When Jesus sent out the twelve Apostles, it says in **Matthew 10:7&8** that He told them, "**Preach as you go saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead . . .**" So they were to preach, "**The kingdom of heaven is at hand!**" And they were to perform certain signs including physical healing and raising the dead. So one of the ways the Kingdom comes is by overcoming death and bringing resurrection.

But notice something very important. To our knowledge- Jesus Himself only raised three people from the dead during His entire earthly Ministry (**Matthew 9:18–26; Luke 7:11–17; John 11:38–44**). And in the Book of the Acts- the Apostles are recorded as raising only two people from the dead (**The Acts 9:36–43; 20:9–10**).

Now contrast this with the countless numbers of people that Jesus healed. Why do you suppose Jesus healed people by the hundreds or even thousands yet raised only three from the dead? Ultimately it comes down to this: in the overlap of this Age and the Age to come—in the "already" and the "not yet" of redemption- in the time of the mystery of the Kingdom—God wills that some blessings of the Age to come- are experienced more fully than others. And He chooses as He wills which blessings we will have now and in what measure. And that is why- at best- very few people are actually healed of organic diseases today and why so few- if any- are raised from the dead.

I suspect that one reason Jesus raised so few people from the dead is that it is no great blessing to have to die twice. And we must always keep in mind that all the people that Jesus healed and raised from the dead got sick again and died. So these Kingdom blessings of physical healings and resurrections were only temporary in this fallen Age. So what are we to make of them?

Physical healings and bodily resurrections during Jesus' earthly Ministry and in the first few years of the Church were signs or pointers or foretastes of Jesus' unique Deity and of the great final Resurrection that is coming for us along with "**the redemption of our bodies**" as **Romans 8:23** describes. So these signs of the Kingdom pointed to Jesus and verified Him as the promised Messiah and gave Divine credibility to the radical Gospel that Jesus gave to the world.

But no matter how you slice this or dice it- no matter if you are convinced Cessationist or a Continuationist- the Biblical Truth is that physical sickness and death were not abolished during the first coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. He healed some- but He didn't heal all. He raised a few from the dead- but He didn't raise most from the dead. So His healings and resurrections were rare and powerful signs of three Truths:

- A. Jesus was God
- B. The Gospel was from God
- C. In the final Kingdom- all sickness and even death itself will be abolished

But in the Age to come- we will be given a new immortal body that has never known disease and that has never known sickness and that will never die. And in that new body- that is free from the internal lust to sin- we will live forever in the very Presence of Jesus and will not even be able to sin against Him again!

2. In Relation to Demonic Oppression and Deliverance

The Kingdom of God overcomes demonic oppression and brings deliverance. In **Luke 11:20** Jesus said,

But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

So the arrival of the Kingdom brings an unprecedented conflict with satan and his demons. But as I have told you before- it is amazing to consider that in the entire Old Testament- there are only about five of the 39 books that even mentions satan. And nowhere in the OT is there any record of any prophet or priest or king or wise man casting out a demon. Not one.

So unlike what Hollywood and most of Christian Television promotes- demons prefer to stay hidden and operate in the background- deceiving people with false teaching and "doctrines of devils". They don't want to be seen or revealed so they can continue to deceive the souls of men.

But as soon as Jesus is on the scene- He is in Face to face conflict with satan and His earthly Ministry was characterized with casting out "many demons" (**Mark 1:34**), and in **Matthew 10:1** it says, "**Jesus called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out . . .** "

So it is clear that something unprecedented was in the offing here with the coming of the Kingdom during Jesus' earthly Ministry. The spiritual conflict that was hidden behind all the idolatry and the rebellion and the disobedience and the national conflict throughout the entire Old Testament is now brought out in the open during Jesus' Ministry and He gives His people a new kind of Authority and armor to make war with the evil one.

And of course the very best weapon against demons and their deception is by genuinely born again believers possessing Divine Truth. So by saved people loving and serving Jesus by speaking the Truth and by learning and knowing and loving the Truth- demonic power is broken and defeated.

3. In Relation to Rebellion and Conversion

The Kingdom overcomes rebellion and brings true conversion. Jesus made clear that no one enters the Kingdom without being converted. In **Matthew 18:3** Jesus says, "**Truly, I say to you, unless you turn [be converted!] and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**" What Power brings about this conversion from rebellious, proud independence to submissive, humble, childlike dependence on God?

The answer is the Power of the Kingdom itself. And this is implied in the parable of the net in **Matthew 13:47-50**: "**The kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish.**" The Kingdom is the Power that gathers the fish. Fish don't normally jump into the net on their own- in fact they try as hard as they can to get out of it. (Cf. **Colossians 1:13**.)

It is also implied in the parable of the wheat and the tares (**Matthew 13:24 and 38**). "**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field . . . He who sows the seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed means the sons of the kingdom.**"

So where do sons of the Kingdom come from in the world? They come from the Son of Man. They don't put themselves in the world. The Son of Man puts them there. (Cf. **John 6:44, 65; 15:16; 17:16.**)

When the rich young ruler turns away from Jesus and Jesus says, **"It will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven,"** the disciples are amazed and say, **"Who then can be saved?"** To this Jesus responds, **"With men this is impossible [to enter the kingdom and be saved], but with God all things are possible"** (**Matthew 19:23–26**). In other words being converted and entering the Kingdom is not merely the work of man. It is far more than a simple choice or an act of man's so-called "free will". It is a Sovereign Act of God. The Bible says that with men- conversion is not difficult- it is impossible to enter the kingdom and be saved on our own. But not with God. God Sovereignly converts people and brings them into the Kingdom.

"It is the Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom of God" (**Luke 12:32**). **"To you it has been given [by God] to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven"** (**Matthew 13:11**). **"Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven"** (**Matthew 16:17; cf. 11:25–27**). So we have repeated references that the Kingdom itself overcomes rebellion and brings conversion.

4. In Relation to Condemnation and Forgiveness

The Kingdom overcomes condemnation and brings forgiveness. The great obstacle to Salvation is that we are guilty of sin and under the just Condemnation of God. Why then is it that the tax collectors and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before the chief priests and the elders (**Matthews 21:31**)? Why is it that the Kingdom of heaven is like a householder who at the end of the day hires people for one hour's work and yet gives them pay for a full day (**Matthew 20:1–16**)? Why is it that the Kingdom of heaven is like a king giving a marriage feast for his son and yet inviting whoever happens to be in the street, both good and bad (**Matthew 22:1, 10**)? And why does Jesus say, **"Blessed are the poor in spirit [the ones who have nothing to commend themselves], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"** (**Matthew 5:3**)?

The answer is given in **Matthew 18:23–35**: the Kingdom of heaven is like a king who called his debtors to account, and when one of them pleads for mercy concerning a million dollar debt, the king has pity and

forgives him everything he owes. So the Kingdom overcomes condemnation and it brings forgiveness. And we know from this side of the Cross how the King did that!

5. In Relation to Wrongdoing and Righteousness

The Kingdom overcomes wrongdoing and brings righteousness. Jesus taught us to pray, "**Your kingdom come, Your will be done**" (**Matthew 6:10**). Where the Kingdom of God comes- the Will of God is done—justice and righteousness abound. "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God,**" Jesus said, "**and his righteousness . . . in the Holy Spirit.**" When the Kingdom of God comes, it comes with righteousness. Paul said in **Romans 14:17**, "**The kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness . . .**" So the Kingdom of God overcomes wrongdoing. It changes the way people live. It brings justice and righteousness.

6. In Relation to Sadness and Joy

The Kingdom overcomes sadness and brings joy. It's obvious that if the Kingdom brings life and healing and deliverance and conversion and forgiveness and righteousness, it would also bring great joy. But Paul makes the point explicit in **Romans 14:17** when he says, "**The kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit.**" And Jesus made it just as plain when he said, "**Blessed—happy—are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**" (**Matthew 5:10**). So the Kingdom overcomes sadness and brings joy—even in the midst of suffering.

7. In Relation to Aimless Futility and Purposeful Ministry

The Kingdom overcomes aimless futility and brings purposeful ministry. And I take this point from **The Revelation 1:6** where John says, "**[Jesus] has made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**" What the Kingdom creates when it draws men and women into its power is a priesthood of believers. And priests are, above all, ministers. So if you belong to the Kingdom of God, you belong to a "royal priesthood" (**1Peter 2:9**). You are a priest. Your calling is to draw near to God with the burdens of people,

and to draw near to people with the blessings of God. That's what it means to be a priest.

So in that sense- the Kingdom has come and it has overcome the aimlessness and futility of our lives and given us an awesome reason to live. We are a royal priesthood. You are a priest to both God and Man!

Amen. Let's pray.