

Reading the Gospels
Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths
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The first three Gospels [Matthew, Mark, and Luke] are considered synoptic gospels in so far they see the same thing. The Gospel of John is part of this body of literature, but considered distinct since much of his material is unique to his writing.

When looking at the Gospels, it is important to keep certain things in mind.

1. Although much material overlaps, each Gospel has its own unique contribution to the *Story*. "Don't harmonize the Gospels. That's like taking four paintings and combining them into one. You come up with something no one painted and no one intended to paint. Let each Gospel author be an artist in his own right. However, a Gospel synopsis are very useful and important in comparing Gospel texts to one another WITHOUT harmonizing them."¹

Canon 3: The Evangelists disagree in their words, but agree in meaning.²

Interpreting the Gospels Many treat the gospels as historical narratives and rightly so. But since there are several unique qualities about the gospels it is also appropriate to view the Gospels as a unique literary genre. What is unique about the gospels?³

- Unique aspects of the gospels
 - Even though the gospels were written by others, there are large teachings sections in which Jesus is quoted. These teaching sections are weaved into the overall historical narrative. Since the gospels contain many teaching sections of Jesus, the opportunity to gain direct theological insights is greater than in other narratives since Jesus often addresses how we should act and what we should believe.⁴
 - There are four gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have a great deal of similarity. They record many of the same events in very similar wording. This means that when you are studying Matthew, Mark, or Luke, there is a good chance there will be a parallel passage in one of the other two gospels. John is unique from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Nearly 93 percent of John's material is different.⁵

2. "When you interpret anything in the Gospels as if the words were spoken or the incident happened in the contemporary world (especially the west), you are almost certainly headed in the wrong direction. The Gospels come to us from another time and place. They aren't inaccessible, but they require us to let them be what they are and not attempt to contemporize them."⁶

- Understand that the ministry of Jesus was unique and that Christians are not expected to duplicate the sign wonders that He did. Jesus did wonders to verify His ministry and give previews of the coming kingdom of God. This does not apply to every Christian.⁷

- Know that some commands and promises of Jesus were limited to His apostles. For example, the command to only preach the kingdom to the house of Israel in Matthew 10 is no longer binding. Also the promise that the twelve apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28) applies directly to the apostles.⁸
- Keep in mind that a major theme of the Gospels is the kingdom of God.⁹

3. “Jesus did and said a lot of things that he didn’t explain. Ever. At all. I don’t believe there are special keys to understanding difficult sayings laying around for us to find in some spiritual treasure hunt. If Jesus first century hearers were often confused, then we will probably be confused too some of the time.”¹⁰

6. “Big ideas dominate the Gospels: Who is Jesus? What kind of messiah is he? What does it mean to be a disciple? How does the law and the temple relate to Jesus? What do we learn from Jesus’ suffering? How did the resurrection change everything? What is the Kingdom of God? The smaller the question, the less likely it is that the Gospels are answering it directly. Perhaps indirectly or less than certainly.”¹¹

8. Our present order follows the sequence of the *Story*. It is not in order of writing. In order of writing, the Gospels follow the Letters.

Canon 2: The Evangelists do not preserve chronological order; they join teachings and events together that occurred on different occasions.¹²

Canon 5: Christ applies the same saying, repeatedly, to different subjects.¹³

“The Gospels were, with the possible exception of a very early Mark, written after most of the early and Pauline epistles. This is a very, very important piece of information in understanding the Gospels. The epistles show us what Christianity looked like organically, and this helps us understand the emphases of the Gospels in relation to the developing church. The Gospels came out of the environment of being church, church planting, church problems and church mission. The Gospels “sync” with this.”¹⁴

¹ <http://www.internetmonk.com/archive/ten-guidelines-for-interpreting-the-gospels>

² <http://www.thesacredpage.com/2011/07/lapides-principles-for-interpreting.html>

³ <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/how-to-study-the-bible/361-interpreting-the-narratives-portions-of-scripture>

⁴ <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/how-to-study-the-bible/361-interpreting-the-narratives-portions-of-scripture>

⁵ <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/how-to-study-the-bible/361-interpreting-the-narratives-portions-of-scripture>

⁶ <http://www.internetmonk.com/archive/ten-guidelines-for-interpreting-the-gospels>

⁷ <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/how-to-study-the-bible/361-interpreting-the-narratives-portions-of-scripture>

⁸ <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/how-to-study-the-bible/361-interpreting-the-narratives-portions-of-scripture>

⁹ <http://theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/how-to-study-the-bible/361-interpreting-the-narratives-portions-of-scripture>

¹⁰ <http://www.internetmonk.com/archive/ten-guidelines-for-interpreting-the-gospels>

¹¹ <http://www.internetmonk.com/archive/ten-guidelines-for-interpreting-the-gospels>

¹² <http://www.thesacredpage.com/2011/07/lapides-principles-for-interpreting.html>

¹³ <http://www.thesacredpage.com/2011/07/lapides-principles-for-interpreting.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.internetmonk.com/archive/ten-guidelines-for-interpreting-the-gospels>

The Kingdom of God in the Gospel of Luke
Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths

Initially, it is important to see how Jesus is the fulfillment of Garden promises. All of the shadows following the Garden embodied in Tabernacle and Temple find their substance in Jesus. He is the fulfillment of the Ancient Promise (Gen. 3:15) and the completion of the Blood Picture (Gen. 3:21). The promise and picture restore humanity with God.

The Kingdom theme is Garden driven. God as Creator is King over the realm created. Satisfaction and celebration mark this kingdom. When Jesus came, what God initiated in the Garden found fulfillment.

The people of God expected the kingdom of God. Simeon, Anna, and Joseph from Arimathea all looked for the kingdom.

- Luke 2:25 ¶ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
- Luke 2:38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.
- Lu 23:51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

What the audience did not anticipate was how the Messiah would suffer and die. They did not anticipate a Garden without God or a Kingdom without the King.

Yet, His death, burial, and resurrection establish the inaugurated kingdom. The mystery form of the Kingdom is the local church. The local church is the Garden. It is not wrong to think in terms of an already/not yet paradigm. The kingdom as it has existed is no less real than what exists or will exist.

Thus, as we think through the Kingdom of God, the Garden in Eden, and the Church Local we should endeavor to synchronize each of these pieces into one beautiful whole that has as its center JESUS.

With this in mind, let us consider Luke's contribution to our understanding of THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Its ancient roots

When the angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary a significant part of his proclamation centered on the throne of David and the kingdom.

- Luke 1:32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

There are ancient footings in the coming of the Messiah. He will be royalty and have an eternal kingdom or reign.

The kingdom proclaimed was a kingdom assumed (e.g. Isa. 9:1-7; 11:6-9; 25:6-9, and 61:1-3). Initially, there is no definition for the kingdom. Its description came from the Old Testament Prophets. As it unfolded, what became evident was a kingdom unexpected. Luke tells us this *Story*.

The prophecy of Zechariah highlights this same idea in Luke 1:69-71.

- Luke 1:69 And has raised up a **horn of salvation for us In the house of David** His servant-- 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old-- 71 Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;

The Messiah will reign over a realm (kingdom). The ministry of John is one of preparation for the king (3:1-22). The genealogy of Jesus provided in Luke 3 traces his line through Nathan and King David (3:31) showing His royal lineage.

What it brings

Jesus proclaims the good news of God's kingdom.

- Luke 4:42-44
⁴² When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away them.
⁴³ But He said to them, "**I must preach the kingdom of God** to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." ⁴⁴ So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. (Luke 4:42-44)
- Luke 8:1
Soon afterwards, He *began* going around from one city and village to another, **proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God**. The twelve were with Him, (Luke 8:1)

The idea of an inaugurated kingdom colors the message of Jesus. The content of the kingdom must be of such a nature that one can know it. Notice the various activities tied to the kingdom message. He tells them to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom.

- Luke 4:40 While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, **He was healing them.** 41 **Demons also were coming out of many,** shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ. 42 When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. 43 But He said to them, "**I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.**" 44 So **He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.**

When Jesus sent the twelve, He entrusted to them the same activities engaging Him (Luke 9:1-6).

- Luke 9:1 ¶ And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. 2 And **He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.** 3 And He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece. 4 "Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that city. 5 "And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." 6 Departing, they began going throughout the villages, **preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.**

Those sent by Jesus were able to do Kingdom miracles. They had Kingdom power and were able to say to those who were present, "The kingdom of God has come near (10:9-11)." They brought shadow presence to the people.

In Luke 9:1ff and 10:1ff where Jesus sent out His disciples, He told them not to worry about such things as food and clothing. The same idea is present in Luke 12:13-34. Because of their proximity to the earthiness of the offered kingdom, all of their immediate needs are of secondary importance. Urgency is in the air. Once the kingdom comes which the Holy Spirit through the Church mediates, His people are to steward their resources.

- Lu 12:31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

As we get nearer to the cross, parables about stewardship occur (Luke 14:25-33; 16:1-13; 17:22-37; 19:11-27; 20:9-18; 21:10-36) and He says to His disciples, "35 When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." 36 And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a

bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. 37 "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment." 38 They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

The gospel and the kingdom message are the same. "Go and proclaim the kingdom of God" is the activity of those He sends (Luke 9:60). His death is not part of this initial message (Luke 9:22). The Kingdom message is powerful and tangible. It is identifiable and irrefutable. The King of God [hereafter KG] is/contains good news.

Its citizenry

Luke's Gospel presents the "poor" as receptive to His message. In Luke 6, there are two sets of people. The contrast and parallel are intentional.

Luke 6:20 ¶ And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say,
"Blessed are you who are **poor**, for **yours is the kingdom of God**.

21 "Blessed are you who **hunger** now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who **weep** now, for you shall laugh.

22 "Blessed are you **when men hate you**, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

23 "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, **your reward is great in heaven**. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

When Jesus speaks of the invitation, He extends it to the desolate and unable (Luke 14:12-24).

- Luke 14:13 "But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

This theme carries throughout Luke's Gospel.

Luke 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

Some suggest the phrase, "Everyone is forcing his way into it," is best understood as, "Everyone is forcefully urged into it." This would align with Luke 14:23 where instruction is given to "compel them to come in."

- Luke 14:23 "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.'

It is of interest to note how the KG is a place where “satisfied” and “laughter” exist. Fulfillment and joy mark the KG. Verse 23 aligns “heaven” with the KG.

The word “satisfied” or “filled” in verse 21 occurs three times in Luke’s Gospel.

- [our current passage] Lu 6:21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: **for ye shall be filled.** Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.
- [The feeding of the five thousand plus crowd] Lu 9:17 **And they did eat, and were all filled:** and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.
- [The story of the Rich man and Lazarus] Lu 16:21 And **desiring to be fed** with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

The word speaks of satiation, of filling up to overflow. This is what awaits God’s people in His Kingdom. When the disciples of John came inquiring, Jesus responded with the following words (Luke 7:22).

- Luke 7:22 And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

Reclining at the table is language suitable in describing the KG.

- Lu 13:28 "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. 29 "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

In the presence of such activities, there is fulfillment and laughter. Psalm 16:11 echoes this same sentiment.

- Psalm 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Luke 9:26 speaks of Kingdom glory. We will shortly note how Jesus is the KG. The Kingdom is glorious because Jesus is glorious. The Kingdom is majestic, because Jesus is majestic. In His presence is fullness of joy. Those near Him bask in His glory and His glory brings sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, cleansing to the leper, and life to the dead. Here, in His presence, His people are satiated with joy and overflowing with laughter.

What are of interest to those who engage the KG are the various stages of its unfolding / fulfillment. Jesus speaks to this in Luke 7 when describing John. Language exists that speaks of status or levels within the KG.

- Lu 7:28 "I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet **he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**"
- Lu 22:29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and **you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

In giving the Parable of the Soils (Luke 8), Jesus speaks of secrets and mysteries. The message of the KG scatters widely. Yet, not everyone embraces the invitation. One of the mysteries is why some believe and others do not. Such ends appear to be in the hand of God.

- Lu 8:1 ¶ Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him,
- Lu 8:10 And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.

When speaking of His own family, inclusion in the KG takes precedence over bloodline (Luke 8:19-21).

Jesus spoke openly about the KG (Luke 9:11). It is stunning to think JESUS spoke and explained the kingdom. Healing marks the KG. HEALING brokenness, strengthening weakened hearts and causing dead people to live. This is the KG.

- Lu 9:11 But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.

His glory and His majesty mark this Kingdom (Luke 9:27-43). The disciples encountered this glory and kingdom and were silent. The kingdom is glorious because JESUS is glorious. The kingdom is nothing without Him. He is the kingdom.

As noted earlier, there is urgency to the kingdom. Jesus brings the kingdom and His impending death, burial, and resurrection will bring in a kingdom that was unexpected.

- Lu 9:60 But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Jesus brings in the kingdom. His hand is on the plow and He never looks back. He will finish what He set out to accomplish.

When Jesus teaches His disciples to pray, an area of focus is on the coming kingdom (Luke 11:2). The prayer prayed at this time sees His death, burial, and resurrection as indispensable in the inaugurating of the kingdom. It is important to remember Jesus speaks of the kingdom being present (Luke 10:9; 17:20). Yet, He also speaks of the praying for the kingdom to come (Luke 11:2). "Because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately," Jesus had to speak of a form of the kingdom that they were not expecting (Luke 19:11-15).

- Lu 11:2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. **Your kingdom come.**'"
- Lu 17:20 ¶ Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, **the kingdom of God is in your midst.**"
- Lu 19:11 ¶ While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and **they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.**12 So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. 15 "When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done."

When the cross was pressing and time was short, Jesus told His disciples not to take money, knapsacks, etc. (Luke 9:1ff; 10:1ff). As the "crisis" passes [even though it has yet to happen], He speaks of a form of the kingdom where resources must be managed (Luke 19:11-15). This time between His initial coming and future arrival is something unanticipated by the "watchers."

Jesus spoke of a single kingdom, but staged over a span of time. Thus, He can speak of something, as it exists in the present and will exist in the future (Luke 21:31; 22:16).

The kingdom of God is of the woman's seed. Since, the woman's seed has a kingdom, so also does the serpent's seed (Luke 11:17-20).

- Lu 11:17 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. 20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Jesus provides an interesting parable as to the inclusive and invasive nature of the KG. He sets the stage in Luke 13:18.

- Lu 13:18 ¶ So He was saying, "**What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? 20 And again He said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?**

In Luke 13:18-21, Jesus speaks of the KG invasive nature. One day, God's design for the Garden will come to pass.

- Numbers 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.
- Psalm 22:27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
- Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
- Isaiah 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.
- Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.
- Zephaniah 3:9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.
- Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

It is of interest to contrast the statement of Jesus in 13:21 with the question and answer given in 13:22-30. How can the KG be pervasive and yet have few who are saved? The intent of 13:22-30 stresses the urgency of choosing while there is time. Delay is costly and consequential. Thus, compelling (Luke 14:23) and urging (Luke 16:16) take place.

Jesus speaks of the KG being in their midst (Luke 17:20-37). The issue of choice presses on the ear of the hearer.

- Luke 17:20-37
²⁰ Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;** ²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' **For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.**" ²² And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after

them. ²⁴ For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. ²⁵ But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. ³² Remember Lot's wife. ³³ Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵ There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁶ [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."] ³⁷ And answering they *said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body *is*, there also the vultures will be gathered." (Luke 17:20-37)

We love the tinsel of eschatology, when the present presses in. The issue cannot be postponed until a later time. They, as well as us, must decide whom we believe Jesus to be. The appeal is for the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the leper to be cleansed, and the dead to live. Yet the invitation is met with resistance. A physician can and will heal all of our maladies. There is a chef who has prepared the most nutritious and delicious meals. A Savior will pay all of our sin debt before God. Yet some will still not accept the offer. Thus, Jesus says, those who come must come as little children (Luke 18:16, 17). Unless and until the sinner acknowledges their broken state, they will not come to the Great Physician of their soul.

- Lu 18:16 But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

Jesus provides a vivid example of what He said in Luke 18:18-30.

- Lu 18:24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,

The tangible and physical request made by Jesus to the Rich Young Ruler vividly pictures the unwillingness of the soul to come. The Rich Young Ruler continued to trust in his own power

and ability to save himself. He believed his compliance to the Law was of his own doing. Jesus would have none of this. Unless and until we come broken, we will not and cannot come at all.

When His audience thought of the KG, there thinking was skewed. In Jesus, the KG was in their midst (Luke 17:21), yet their idea of the KG was still future. Between the already/not yet, His people were to steward the truth about Jesus.

- Luke 19:11-27

¹¹ While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. ¹² So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and *then* return. ¹³ And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business *with this* until I come *back*.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' ¹⁵ When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. ¹⁶ The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ The second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' ¹⁹ And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' ²⁰ Another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; ²¹ for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.' ²² He *said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' ²⁴ Then he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' ²⁵ And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas *already*.' ²⁶ I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. ²⁷ But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.'" (Luke 19:11-27)

The issue pressing is always what one thinks/believes about JESUS. He reteaches this same idea in Luke 20:9-18. The sense of urgency present with His presence, still presses in, in His absence. What do we think of Him?

- Luke 20:9-18

⁹ And He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. ¹⁰ At the *harvest* time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him *some* of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ The owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I

will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’¹⁴ But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.’¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?¹⁶ He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others.” When they heard it, they said, “May it never be!”¹⁷ But Jesus looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone’?¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” (Luke 20:9-18)

As the “end” encroaches and the storyline appears to fail, the disciples press for more information about the KG. Jesus provides them the schematic for what is about to unfold. Do not be deceived by the spectacular or sensational. Stay the course and steward the truth.

- Luke 21:7-36

⁷ They questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?”⁸ And He said, “See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not go after them.⁹ When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end *does not follow* immediately.”¹⁰ Then He continued by saying to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,¹¹ and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.¹² “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake.¹³ It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.¹⁴ So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;¹⁵ for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.¹⁶ But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death,¹⁷ and you will be hated by all because of My name.¹⁸ Yet not a hair of your head will perish.¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives.²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.²¹ Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;²² because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.²³ Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.²⁵ “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,²⁶ men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.²⁷ Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.²⁸ But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”²⁹ Then He told them a parable: “Behold the

fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they put forth *leaves*, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. ³⁴ "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; ³⁵ for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. ³⁶ But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:7-36)

When people pushed against Jesus concerning His authority over demons, they accused Him of being a demon. Jesus refutes their thesis and states the opposite. All of hell bows before the Son of God/Son of Man. In His coming, He overthrows the kingdom of darkness.

- Luke 11:14-26

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." (Luke 11:14-26)

I always find it stunning when His audience asks of Him a sign. What else could He possibly do that He left undone? The powers of darkness are capable of doing many supernatural things, but there is one thing only God can do. Jesus forgives sin. It is for this reason, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dumb speak. He is reversing the curse. See also Luke 7:49, 50. JESUS does something no one else or nothing else can do. JESUS FORGIVES SIN. Every bad thing in your life is either directly or indirectly a result of sin.

By praying for the kingdom's arrival (Luke 11:2) and speaking of a kingdom whose fulfillment is yet future, does not negate the reality of its present form (Luke 21:31; 22:16; 23:42). Because we fail to understand the connective "tissue" binding the Garden and the kingdom and the

Church together, we splinter the singularity of God's *Story* where Jesus is THE means of understanding the whole.

- Lu 21:31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, **recognize that the kingdom of God is near.**
- Lu 22:16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is **fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**" 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on **until the kingdom of God comes.**"
- Lu 23:42 And he was saying, "Jesus, **remember me when You come in Your kingdom!**"

What Jesus inaugurated, continues right now in and through His Church. Is there more, absolutely, but we cannot afford to divide what God has joined together.