

Kingdoms in Conflict: Belief and Unbelief

Psalm 115:2-5, 8-11 (NIV®)

- ² Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?"
- ³ Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.
- ⁴ But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.
- ⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;
- ⁸ Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.
- ⁹ O house of Israel, trust in the LORD-- he is their help and shield.
- ¹⁰ O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD-- he is their help and shield.
- ¹¹ You who fear him, trust in the LORD-- he is their help and shield.

I. God & Miracles (Beyond us, we learn by watching & listening)

John 11:38-44 (NIV®)

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

A. Observations

- 1. Physical Changes from Spiritual Influences
- 2. Unexpected (Maybe Even Offensive) Circumstances
- 3. Unbelief Greater Than Affirmation (More Questions Than Congratulations)

B. Receiving? Characteristics of Those Who Received

- 1. Cooperate
- 2. Surprise/Amazement
- 3. Deep Need
- 4. Intentionally Public (For the Glory of God)

II. Beggars (Humility)

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NIV®)

²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

A. In Christ

B. Called & Chosen

C. What do You Celebrate? (Boast About?)

Matthew 19:23 (NIV®)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Mark 4:19 (NIV®)

but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Matthew 3:7-9 (NIV®)

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

D. Self-righteousness is a bigger problem than unrighteousness

Luke 7:44-48 (NIV®)

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

E. Attitudes can separate us from God's intent

Luke 4:24-30 (NASB77®)

²⁴ And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town. ²⁵ "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; ²⁶ and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, *in the land* of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸ And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; ²⁹ and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. ³⁰ But passing through their midst, He went His way.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

I rejoice today in your majesty and strength. Nothing is hidden from your eyes or escapes your notice. I rest in the shadow of your wings. Your power and grace overshadow my life. Grant me the strength to complete the tasks for which I was created. I rejoice in the knowledge that the one who created all things is my protector and shield. May the name of Jesus be exalted through my days on the earth. In Jesus' name, amen.

Easter Proclamation

Easter reminds us that life is greater than death.

Faith triumphed over fear.

Suffering must give way to rewards and restoration.

This Easter is a declaration that Jesus is Lord in our world.

Jesus is Lord over every pandemic.

Jesus is Lord over every government and government official.

Jesus is Lord over the media and big tech and all those who imagine they can control information.

Jesus is Lord in our homes.

Jesus is Lord over our future.

Jesus is the head of the Church.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

By Him all things were created, both in heavens and on earth ---visible and invisible.

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Col 1:15-20)

Those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful. (Rev 17:14)

Jesus is the faithful witness. He is the firstborn from the dead.

He is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

He loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

He has made us to be a kingdom of priests and to serve his God and Father

to him be glory and power for ever & ever, Amen. (Rev 1:5-6)