

Luke 17:20-25 – Thy Kingdom Come, Part 1

- 1) Today Jesus has a message for two groups of people
 - a) In 17:20-21, He answers a question of the Pharisees
 - b) In 17:22-37, He gives a longer answer to His disciples – we will only have time to look at the first few verses today
 - c) This lesson represents only a part of Jesus’ teachings on the subject – as well as a much larger group of teachings on “the coming Kingdom” from the Prophets, the Wisdom Literature, and the Apostles – all of which needs to be kept in mind to keep us from misapplying the words of Jesus
 - d) For example, Jesus tells the Pharisees that “the Kingdom does not come through observation” – which many interpret as “The Kingdom does not come by way of signs that can be observed”
 - i) Yet a few verses later, as well as in other portions of the Gospels (Matthew 24, Luke 21, especially verses 11 and 25) Jesus gives the disciples signs that His return is near
 - ii) Even the miracles (John 3:2, 6:2, 7:31, 9:16, 11:47 and 12:37) and teachings (Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:22, 27, John 7:17, 14:10) of Jesus were signs that “the Kingdom of heaven is already in your midst” (verse 21)
- 2) The Pharisees begin by asking Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come, not realizing that Jesus IS the Kingdom – where Jesus is, the Kingdom is
 - i) Jesus knows what the future would bring – that He must die and the coming of the kingdom “delayed”
 - ii) Yet from an earthly perspective, the Kingdom could have been established when Jesus first came, had they believed in Him (13:34-35, 19:42)
 - iii) For the Kingdom to come we do not have to “help it come” by **reacting to signs** – rather, we are called upon simply to **believe in and live for the King**; God Himself will engineer its coming – we are privates in God’s army, not generals; ambassadors, not presidents
- 3) 17:21a: If people are pointing out to you the “fact” that the Kingdom of God has already come (as they did in the early Church – 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5), you will know they are misguided at best or deliberately lying, because when it actually comes, everyone will know without being told
- 4) 17:21b: Is the Kingdom “within” or “among”? The Greek word can be translated either way
 - a) We must remember who Jesus is speaking to – His enemies
 - i) It seems unlikely that He would say that the Kingdom of God was “within” those who were rejecting Him
 - ii) Yet, the King of the Kingdom of God was already standing in their midst – that is, “among” them
 - b) The Kingdom of God is within believers through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Romans 5:5) – but the Spirit had not yet been given to the disciples as it would be after Jesus’ ascension (John 7:39)
 - c) Though the Kingdom is within us, it has not yet been established on the earth
 - d) We are ambassadors living away from our home; when war between this world and God is about to erupt (the “day when God will judge those living in the world” – Acts 17:31, Romans 2:5 and 16, 2 Timothy 4:1) we will be called home (Rapture – Luke 21:36, Corinthians 11:32, Revelation 3:10))
 - e) There will be no need to look for the Kingdom when it comes because its coming will be unmistakable (verse 24)
- 5) 17:22-37: Though Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees is only a verse and a half, He goes into much more detail with His disciples – we will only look at verses 22 through 25 today
 - a) 17:22: As the darkness of this age continues (and thickens), as we continue to suffer with disease and grief, wars and upheavals, we long for the signs of the Kingdom – the miracles of Jesus and clear teachings on the Truth – to be seen again (see Amos 8:11, Isaiah 64:1-3)
 - b) 17:23: Because of this distress and our longing for Jesus, we will be vulnerable to false hopes and empty solutions
 - c) 17:24-25: Jesus’ coming as King will be glorious, but only after the humiliation of crucifixion – in the same way, we too “must endure hardships if we are to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22) and there are no shortcuts
 - d) Only by sharing in the sufferings of Christ did Paul expect to “know” His resurrection power (Philippians 3:10-11)
 - e) We “suffer” for Christ by denying self as we fight against temptation, and as we endure the persecution that will come due to standing with Christ for Truth