

Luke 17:20-21

Introduction: As Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem for the last time, He is questioned by some Pharisees who are also heading to Passover. Jesus teaches both the unbelieving Pharisees (17:20-21) and His believing disciples (17:22-37). We will look at His response to the unbelievers today and to the believers next time.

- 1) The unbelieving Pharisees question Jesus concerning the timing of the Kingdom—17:20a ²⁰ *Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God would come,*
 - a) They anticipated a literal kingdom based on Dan. 2:44. At least they came to the right Person to get information. Who better to ask than the King Himself!
 - b) But their question is not rooted in genuine faith. It is little more than natural curiosity.
 - c) This question was more of a challenge, implying that if Jesus was what He had been claiming to be for so long, He should prove His claim by instituting the kingdom without further delay. It is evident from the Pharisees' question that they expected a literal, physical fulfillment of the kingdom promised to Israel in the OT. (Pentecost)

- 2) Jesus responds to the natural curiosity of the unbelieving Pharisees—17:20b-21 *He responded to them and said,*
 - a) Jesus corrects their wrong thinking with a **negative** response—17:20b-21a
 - i) Negative statement #1: do not seek ambiguous apocalyptic signs to focus on—17:20b *“The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;*
 - Jesus does not address the **When?** but He does address the **How?**
 - (1) They don't need to be looking for some unusual signs, even though that was the common Jewish view.
 - (2) Luke, the doctor, uses a phrase to compare to how a medical doctor watches closely for symptoms of a disease. (Magill)
 - (3) They have already missed all the signs Jesus has presented throughout His ministry. More signs are not going to help them!
 - ii) Negative statement # 2: do not follow other people's competitive suggestions which imply something private or secret—17:21a ²¹ *nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There!’*
 - b) Jesus corrects their wrong thinking with a **positive** response—17:21b
 - Jesus shifts from addressing the **How?** to addressing the **Where?**
 - i) Positive statement: recognize its unambiguous presence; something central, public, and unmistakable—*For* (explaining why one does not need to go hunting for the Kingdom) *behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst [ἐντός] of you^{pl}.*
 - (1) What this does **not** mean
 - (a) He is not saying that the kingdom of God is in or even among the unbelieving, hostile Pharisees.

- (b) The Kingdom does not enter people; people enter the Kingdom.
- (2) What this **does** mean
 - (a) Jesus has been announcing this Kingdom (Matt. 12:28). The present form (Matt. 13:1-52) was not revealed in the OT because of Israel rejection of it in Jesus' ministry. Jesus reveals the future aspect of the Kingdom in the next section.
 - (b) The sign is Jesus. He is pointing to Himself as He stands in their midst. The Kingdom of God is inseparably linked to Jesus. Jesus is the embodiment of the Kingdom. To embrace Jesus is to embrace the Kingdom of God.
 - (c) They don't need to search elsewhere for signs of the Kingdom. It's right before your eyes. Come to Christ! The way to God's Kingdom is through Jesus.
 - (d) If you don't know the King, you will never enter the Kingdom.
- ii) What is the Kingdom to which Jesus refers?
 - (1) The earthly rule and reign of the King on this earth for 1,000 years.
- 3) What else has Jesus taught about this Kingdom so far in Luke?
 - a) Luke uses the word Kingdom over 40 times, more than any other NT author
 - i) Messiah's literal, physical kingdom over the literal regenerated people of Israel—1:33; 22:29-30; 23:42
 - ii) Kingdom of God (33x)—4:43 through 23:51
 - iii) The Father's kingdom—11:2
 - iv) Human kingdoms—11:17; 19:12, 15; 21:10
 - v) Satan's kingdom—11:18
 - vi) Matthew is the only NT author to refer to the "kingdom of heaven" (32x)
 - b) The church may share in some aspects of what the kingdom is, but the kingdom program is larger than that of the church. Do not equate the two. The church is in the kingdom in some way, but it is not the kingdom (Bock)
- 4) Things for us to remember
 - a) Remember Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3:3, 5.
 - b) It is your own relationship with the King Himself that is of utmost importance. Do you know the King?
 - c) If you know the King, are you longing for His kingdom to be established on this earth?