

Study Of Luke 17:21 In Relation To Erroneous Translation of "Kingdom Within You"

- The Kingdom of God was certainly not "within" the Pharisees who were the ones addressed, though useage of the expression permits this meaning. The historical situation requires a reference to the Kingdom as present "among" the Pharisees. This is the Kingdom whose arrival Jesus had already anounced (Matthew 12:28, Sec 79; Luke 11:20, Sec 144), but that for the present was found in a form not predicted in the Old Testament (Matthew 13:1-52, Secs 82-92), because of His rejection by Israel. In subsequent versus Jesus proceeds to speak of the coming of the Kingdom as the disciples knew it fromthe Old Testament (Sec 174). This would come only after the Son of Man's rejection by that generation, however (Luke 17:24-25, Sec 174)

source: A Harmony Of The Gospels; pg 162
by Robert L. Thomas & Stanley N. Gundry; NASB

NASB

-- Luke 17:21 - nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Interlinear Greek NT

Luke 17:21

3761 [e]	2046 [e]	2400 [e]	5602 [e]	2228 [e]	1563 [e]	2400 [e]	1063 [e]	3588 [e]	932 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	1787 [e]	4771 [e]	1510 [e]
oude	erousin	idou	hōde	ē	Ekei	idou	gar	hē	basileia	tou	Theou	entos	hymōn	estin
21 οὐδὲ	ἔρουσιν	, Ἰδοὺ	ὧδε	, ἢ	Ἐκεῖ	. ἰδοὺ	γὰρ	, ἡ	βασιλεία	τοῦ	Θεοῦ	ἐντὸς	ὑμῶν	ἔστιν
nor	will they say	Behold	here	or	There	Behold	for	the	kingdom	-	of God	in the midst	of you	is
Conj	V-FIA-3P	V-AMA-2S	Adv	Conj	Adv	V-AMA-2S	Conj	Art-NFS	N-NFS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Prep	PPro-G2P	V-PIA-3S

Geneva Bible Footnote Commentary on Luke 17:21 --

(c) You look around for the Messiah as though he were absent, but he is amongst you in the midst of you.

NIV Footnotes

-- Luke 17:21 'Or among'

Net Bible 2005 footnotes --

65 - This is a present tense in the Greek text.

In contrast to waiting and looking for the kingdom, it is now available.

66 - This is a far better translation than "in you." Jesus would never tell the hostile Pharisees that the kingdom was inside them.

The reference is to Jesus present in their midst. He brings the kingdom.

Another possible translation would be "in your grasp."

For further discussion and options, see D. L. Bock, Luke (BECNT), 2:1414-19.

... an interesting sidenote:

"the corrupt New World Translation", which the Jehovah's Witness cult has bought the copyrights to, even in their corrupt translation the translator got Luke 17:21 neither will people be saying. 'See here!' or, 'There!' For, look! the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Wilburn E. Best (pastor of Kingwood Assembly, Texas, USA)

Quote from "Christ's Kingdom Is Future

- Volume II Introduction Of The King"; page 5

(3) Others take a few verses, like the kingdom is at hand, the kingdom of God is come unto you, it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom, the kingdom of God is within you, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Matt. 3:2; 12:28; Luke 12:32; 17:21; Col. 1:13), and try to fit the whole subject of the kingdom into these few texts without explaining them within their own contexts.

They deny a future kingdom and spiritualize these verses to mean either no future kingdom, a present realized kingdom, a kingdom in the heart, a present spiritual reign, gospel kingdom, etc. However, one cannot state too emphatically that a literal promise spiritualized is an interpretational hoax or breach of confidence.

Wilburn E. Best (pastor of Kingwood Assembly, Texas, USA)
Quote from "Simple Faith A Misnomer"; page 11

Our Lord illustrated subjective faith in the widow of the parable of the unjust judge in Luke 18:1-8. But the widow had assurance by the objective truth she heard. This parable and the parable of the Pharisee and the publican are interjected between our Lords answer to the Pharisees demand to know when the kingdom of God shall come (Luke 17:20-37) and the parable of the nobleman who has gone into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and return (Luke 19:12-27). Hence, they are recorded between two prophetic portions of Scripture. Christians in this age are being prepared by grace for the kingdom which Jesus Christ shall establish when He returns to the earth.

Wilburn E. Best (pastor of Kingwood Assembly, Texas, USA)
Quote from "Diminishing Spirituality In Local Churches: Studies in Revelation 2 & 3;
pages 30,31

The book of Revelation is not a description of Gods government in the churches of Jesus Christ, as Amillennialists teach. The kingdom is not the church. Kingdom and church are not synonymous terms. The word church comes from the Greek word ekklesia, which refers to the elect having been effectually called out by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. This work of Jesus Christ is done by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The word used for kingdom is basileia. It refers to what Jesus Christ Himself will do. Therefore, the two cannot be equated. The church is the fruit of Christs first advent, and the kingdom will be the result of His second advent. The church, as the body of Christ, is the heir of the kingdom. Heirship does not indicate that the inheritance has already been given. If church and kingdom refer to the same thing, Is the church the heir of the church, or is the church the heir of the kingdom? Since Jesus Christ gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:25) that He might reign with her in the kingdom, how can the church and the kingdom be one and the same?

The local aspect of the church is weak and imperfect. The weakness of the local aspect of the church is seen in the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia. The church at her inception lacked one of the essentials of a kingdom constituted form of government (Acts 6:1-6; 14:23; Eph. 4:11-16). Elders are needed in the church, but there will be no need for elders in the kingdom. We will all reign together with Jesus Christ in the kingdom. The church is called unto the kingdom (I Thess. 2:12). Through much tribulation the saints shall enter the kingdom (Acts 14:22). Would it be the same to say the church enters the church or the kingdom enters the kingdom? Confusion would abound if the church and the kingdom were synonymous.

Various views are taught:

- (1) The church/kingdom is ruled by the Pope.
- (2) It is ruled by the State.
- (3) Local churches are ruled by the conference.

Others oppose all these forms of government. Few believe that Jesus Christ alone should rule. There is a variety to suit all inclinations. The kingdom is not a preparatory stage for the church or the kingdom, but the church is a preparatory stage for the kingdom.

Amillennialists claim the kingdom of God is the spiritual reign of God in the heart. If the kingdom is the spiritual reign of God in the heart, the correct interpretation of Matthew 3:2 would have to be Repent ye (plural): for the creation of spiritual reigns (plural) of the heavens in the hearts of all who believe are at hand. How could these spiritual reigns be merely at hand since repentance is the fruit of regeneration? John the Baptist went out into the wilderness of Judea preaching, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. If the kingdom and the church are the same, how could he say the kingdom, the church, or the spiritual reign of God in the heart is at hand when the persons to whom he spoke had not even manifested repentance the fruit of regeneration? John required that his hearers show fruits meet for repentance before he would baptize them (Matt. 3:8). If the kingdom is symbolical, repentance must also be symbolical.

The word church could be substituted for the word kingdom and the word kingdom could be substituted for the word church in all of Scripture if they are the same. Matthew 3:2 would have to read, Repent ye: for the church is at hand. Matthew 6:10 would read, Thy church come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. How can we pray for the church to come today when all believers are her subjects? Matthew 8:12 would read, But the children of the church shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Out of which aspect of the church are they cast? Are they cast out of the local or the universal aspect of the church? Matthew 16:18-19 would read, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my kingdom...and I will give unto thee the keys of the church of heaven. Matthew 25:34 would read, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the church prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Luke 17:20-21 would read, The church of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the church of God is within you. To whom was our Lord speaking? He was speaking to the religious Jews. Was the kingdom or the church in them? No! It was among them in the Person of Jesus Christ the King. Who would be so foolish as to say that the kingdom was in the hearts of those religious Pharisees? This would have to be the invisible aspect of the church if it comes not with observation. Evidently many religionists believe the church is only within. The church is neither here nor there to them. I Corinthians 15:50 would read, Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the church of God.

There are twelve references to the kingdom in the church epistles. Substitute the word kingdom for the word church or vice versa in a few verses: all the kingdoms of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:4); so ordain I in all the kingdoms (I Cor. 7:17); he that prophesieth edifieth the kingdom (I Cor. 14:4); For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the kingdom of God (I Cor. 15:9); unto the kingdom of the Thessalonians (I Thess. 1:1); God, who hath called you unto his church and glory (I Thess. 2:12). These should suffice to prove that the kingdom and the church are not synonymous. They do not mean the same, and they are not used in the same sense. There will be no need for

edification in the kingdom because the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Paul did not persecute the kingdom because it was not in existence. He persecuted the church.

Wilburn E. Best (pastor of Kingwood Assembly, Texas, USA)
Quote from "Eternity And Time" pages 224-226

The first three views mentioned espouse the spiritualization of literal promises. Although there are varying degrees of interpretations, all who spiritualize literal promises have one thing in common Old Testament prophecies are largely fulfilled in the church in a nonliteral manner. Amillennialists deny that the thousand years of Revelation 20 refer to the reign of Christ on the earth. They believe that it is a symbolic reference to the complete period between the two advents of Jesus Christ. Hence, the kingdom is the reign of God in the heart. On the other hand, those who embrace the realized millennial view accuse the amillennialists of being too negative. They teach the present reality of the reign of Christ on the earth. There is a major difference between those who spiritualize prophecy. Some believe the new heaven and earth are the church age itself, and others believe they are the beginning of the eternal state. Realized millennialists accuse amillennialists of explaining away rather than explaining the millennium.

The battle between literalizing and spiritualizing Scripture will never cease as long as men are in time. All Christians believe that some prophecies are to be understood literally and others spiritually. The reality of both cannot be ignored. There are both literal and spiritual descendants of Abraham (Rom. 9:6-8; 4:16-25; John 8:33-40). Surely there is no difficulty understanding the difference between the seed and the children of Abraham. Resurrection is both spiritual and physical (Eph. 2:1-10; Col. 3:1-4). Prophecies must be interpreted in harmony with Gods prophetic program. Therefore, to take the prophecy of the new heaven and earth and spiritualize them to mean the assembly (church) age makes as much sense as spiritualizing the incarnation. Would those who spiritualize the kingdom, throne, new Jerusalem, and the new heaven and earth go so far as to say Christ had a spiritual body during the days of His flesh on earth? Was Christs death only spiritual without a physical demise?

Many are categorized under the spiritualistic interpretation of the Scriptures. They believe the kingdom is the reign of God in the heart. Thus, to them, the kingdom is soteriological. They use Luke 17:20-21 as their proof text: And when he [Christ] was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. When the kingdom of God should come determines the answer to the question raised by the Pharisees. Would Christ give information to His enemies that was denied His disciples? (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7). The Greek word for observation is parateresis, which means the act of careful watching or intent observation. This word is understood in the light of the context. No one will be able to observe the coming of the kingdom, because it will come suddenly and unexpectedly at the second advent of Christ. This fact is illustrated by

lightning and the days of Noah (Luke 17:24-27; Matt. 24:39). If the kingdom is the reign of God in the heart, what do Matthew 3:2 and II Timothy 4:1 teach?
...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
...who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

Realized millennialism has a false premise. The concept of one thousand years of non-utopian reign of Christ as a present reality will not withstand the test of Holy Scripture. The concept of eschatology that maintains the first nineteen and part of the twentieth chapters of Revelation are history is unthinkable. There is no possible way for realized millennialists to make one thousand years to mean two thousand. Furthermore, the kingdom is connected with the second, not the first advent of Jesus Christ (Luke 17:22-37; II Tim. 4:1).

The major difference among premillennialists concerning the new heaven and earth is whether they precede or follow the millennium. Those who advocate the former say the heavens and earth must be renewed in preparation for Christ's righteous reign on earth. Whereas, those who embrace the latter ask how there can be death and people subject to deception in the new heaven and earth. Others caught in a dilemma between what they call two undesirable alternatives say there will be a partial renewal at the beginning and a final renewal at the conclusion of the millennium. Hence, they believe the fire of II Peter 3:10-13 is in part premillennial and in part postmillennial, the latter being the most destructive.