

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon July 5, 2020
Luke 17: 20 – 21 “About the Kingdom of God – Part 1”

Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." 20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." 22 Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. 24 For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. 25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. 31 In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left." 37 And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

I. Introduction

- a. When will the Kingdom of God come? Where is the Kingdom coming? The Pharisees and the disciples both demonstrate curiosity about the Kingdom of God in this section of Luke. They don't understand the kingdom. In today's text, Jesus answers the Pharisees in a surprising way, with royal irony. The significance of Christ's Words are invisible to the Pharisees, yet for His elect, by His Spirit, the meaning is clear. Will you see it today? Will you hear the Spirit's voice in the Word's of Christ today? Or, will you be like the Pharisees, blind to what is literally staring you in the face?
- b. Brief overview of the Kingdom views throughout history
 - i. Definitions:
 1. 2nd Advent – Christ's physical return to earth. Faithful Christians believe Jesus Christ will physically return to the earth again in the

future. Full preterism departs from orthodoxy by claiming Jesus Christ's 2nd Advent has already occurred.

2. Millennium – the timeframe encompassing Christ's reign in His Kingdom. Some take it to be a literal 1000 years. Others take it figuratively for an unspecified, very long period of time.
 3. Providential Kingdom – Distinct from the mediatorial reign of Christ in His Kingdom. The Lord God reigns over all of the events of man throughout all of history via His foreordained will and almighty providence. Began at Creation and will never end.
 4. Mediatorial Kingdom – The reign of Jesus Christ, beginning sometime after His life, death, resurrection and ascension and ending at His 2nd Advent. Exists within the Providential Kingdom. One could say Christ's Kingdom's expression is making the Providential Kingdom and the Mediatorial Kingdom one expression as history progresses. "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
- ii. Pre-millennialism perspective
 1. Christ's Kingdom will not begin until after His 2nd Advent. His 2nd Advent occurs before ("pre") His Kingdom begins. In this view, we are not currently living in the millennial Kingdom of Christ.
 - iii. Post-millennialism
 1. Christ's Kingdom exists before His 2nd Advent. According to this view, Christ's millennial Kingdom has already begun, and we are living in it.
 - iv. A-millennialism
 1. Christ's Kingdom is not specifically tied in timing to when He will return at His 2nd Advent. The focus is upon the Kingdom of God as an internal, spiritual reality.
 2. But, this view does believe that Christ's reign in His Kingdom exists now within the hearts of His elect.
 - v. Pan-millennialism (ha-ha)
 1. "It will all pan out in the end" – Funny, yes, but not a good and honorable attitude toward God's Word because God does instruct us about the future, and what God says should be the highest priority in our lives.
- c. So, as you listen to today's sermon, ask yourself how today's text sheds light upon these questions about the kingdom of God. It is my assertion that getting this wrong may not impact your forgiveness before God, but it will GREATLY impact your sanctification and effectiveness during your life here on earth, GREATLY impact your understanding of the dominion mandate and the Great Commission, GREATLY impact the status of the Church of the Living God in the earth, and GREATLY impact the society in which the Church dwells.
 - d. Today's sermon: "About the Kingdom of God – Part 1"
 - i. The question of when – v20a

- ii. How the Kingdom does NOT come – v20b-21a
 - iii. Where the Kingdom is – v21b
- II. The question of when – v20a
 - a. “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come”
 - b. So, the Pharisees, even though they have witnessed Jesus Christ fulfilling God’s Word, witnessed Jesus Christ carrying out the Messianic predictions, they are still blind to what is happening in their midst, to Who is standing among them.
 - i. Remember Luke 7, after Jesus resurrected the widow’s son, where Jesus declares He is the Coming One, the Messiah, and He references OT prophecy (Isaiah) to prove He is the Messiah:
 - 1. “So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. 16 Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." 17 And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region. 18 Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. 19 And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" 20 When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' " 21 And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. 22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. 23 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.””
 - ii. Sadly, the Pharisees are still offended because of Jesus, the One Who had just miraculously healed 10 lepers and Who had already demonstrated His complete control over human sickness and death, over all demonic forces, and over creation.
 - 1. The King had already arrived, and yet the Pharisees are still seeking signs of the ARRIVAL of the Kingdom.
 - c. “When” - Note the first focus of those who are confused about the arrival of the Kingdom of God. They focus upon timing, and this pre-occupation causes them to get carried away looking for signs in order to believe in the Kingdom’s presence. They don’t understand that one must first know the King in all His ministry before one can see and believe His Presence and His Works in His Kingdom.
 - i. Bock “The probability is that certain specific eschatological signs are being asked about, since Jesus warns in 17:21 about not needing to go to certain locales to see the coming. Jesus’ humble style of ministry and way of revealing the mystery of the kingdom did not match the glorious

picture of the kingdom's coming in some Jewish settings (Ps. Sol. 17; Marshall 1978: 654; W. Davies 1962: 19–30; Neusner, Green, and Frerichs 1987). With much of Judaism, the Pharisees believed that the coming of the glorious kingdom would be so clear and powerful that great heavenly signs would signal its arrival. The question is not surprising, given the nature of Jesus' ministry."¹

- ii. Again, confusion about God's Kingdom leads to a confused searching for signs in order to perceive the Kingdom's arrival/progress:
 1. Ann Graham Lotz: "'If I live out my natural lifetime, I believe I will live to see the return of Jesus Christ to this earth," she said. Lotz told CBN News she bases this belief on what Jesus said in Scripture and other biblical signs. "Matthew 24 just listed the signs, categorized them. I watch for them, and so we're seeing signs that He said are like birth pains which means I think they increase in intensity and frequency," she explained. "So when something is record-breaking, which the earthquakes, the snowstorms, the floods -- they are record-breaking -- that's increasing in intensity. When they increase in frequency -- so it's not just one historic flood this year, but now it's like this month, and now it's this week, and it's just -- they're ratcheting up in frequency and in intensity," she said."
- iii. How does Jesus answer this confused question from the Pharisees? When they've missed the Kingdom's arrival and search for signs of its arrival, how does He correct their confusion.

III. How the Kingdom does NOT come - v20b-21a

- a. He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'"
- b. The Pharisees did not understand how to perceive the ARRIVAL of the Kingdom of God, searching for signs instead of the Messiah Himself. As long as they deny the Kingdom has already arrived, they will keep seeking signs of its arrival. True, future signs will come to this first century audience, but not to mark the Kingdom's arrival, but rather to mark the Lord's judgment upon apostate Israel.
- c. About "observation"-
 - i. Bock "Most likely παρατήρησις alludes to general apocalyptic signs, so prevalent in early Jewish eschatological speculation, including the desire to calculate the kingdom's arrival by what is seen (1 Enoch 91, 93; 2 Bar. 53–74). Such anticipation was grounded in OT prophetic imagery....The Pharisees ignore what is happening before their eyes and instead look for signs, thus missing what God is doing through Jesus (Luke 11:29; 12:54–

¹ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1412). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

56; 16:27). Jesus is not objecting to calendar-reckoning so much as their failure to see the present “sign of the time.”²

- ii. Calvin “The word *observation* is here employed by Christ to denote extraordinary splendor; and he declares, that the kingdom of God will not make its appearance at a distance, attended by pompous display.... they are greatly mistaken who seek with the eyes of the flesh *the kingdom of God*, which is in no respect carnal or earthly... From the nature of the kingdom itself he shows that they are altogether in the wrong, who look around *here* or *there*, in order to observe visible marks.”³
- d. Remember how the Kingdom of God begins. The arrival of the Kingdom of God is in view here. It’s arrival is a easy to miss as a mustard seed or leaven. But, as it grows, it becomes impossible to miss.
 - i. Luke 13: “Then He said, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.” 20 And again He said, “To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.””
 - e. So, how do we search for the arrival of the Kingdom of God? How do we know when the Kingdom has come? Jesus answers quite clearly.

IV. Where the Kingdom is - v21b

- a. “For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”
- b. An important textual translation point.
 - i. KJV “is within you”
 - ii. ESV “in the midst of you”
 - iii. Even though the overall translational philosophy of the KJV and the NKJV are superior to the ESV/NIV, in this case the KJV/NKJV is decidedly weaker. The best translation is “For indeed, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”
- iv. “within you” or “inside you” problems:
 - 1. Why would Jesus tell the Pharisees, that group clearly opposed to Him, clearly not regenerated, that the Kingdom of God is within THEM?
 - 2. We don’t the Kingdom of God spoken of in purely internal fashion anywhere else in the NT.
 - 3. Bock “Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, who are the last group of people that Jesus would say has the kingdom in them ...it would be strange if Jesus said this to the Pharisees and never to his disciples! Second, nowhere else in the NT is the kingdom spoken

² Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1413–1414). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

³ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 211–212). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

of in internal terms ...The kingdom is a community of residence, blessing, and enablement, while it is the Spirit who marks one for membership.”⁴

- v. Superiority of “in the midst of you”
 - 1. It is an appropriate Greek translation and it fits this context perfectly. The irony is heightened by this meaning and corresponds with Christ’s emphasis of how some are blind and deaf even though the Word and Light are staring them in the face.
 - 2. Bock “the phrase means “in your presence” or “before you” (Isa. 45:14 [“God is among you”]; ...The emphasis here would be that the Pharisees confront the kingdom in Jesus. They do not need to look all around for it because its central figure is in front of their eyes. ...Since Jesus and his authority are the major obstacles in the Pharisees’ way, this view fits the context nicely. To see the kingdom, look to Jesus and what he offers.”⁵
- c. Jesus tells the Pharisees they have already missed the arrival of the Kingdom because they deny He is the promised Messiah. They deny He is the current King, so they cannot see the current Kingdom. At that time, the prophesied OT Messianic Kingdom had arrived. This timing reality is important for us to note today. They should not have asked when is the Kingdom, but Who is the King?
 - i. Bock “If Jesus refers to a present coming of the kingdom, then he is saying that his presence represents the kingdom’s arrival. He is the answer to the Pharisees’ question (17:20a). Such is the consistent declaration of Luke (4:16–30; 7:22–28; 9:1–6; 10:17–20; 11:20; 16:16). They do not need to search for the kingdom, because the one who brings the kingdom and its program is before them. They need only to respond to him to find its presence and benefits...They need to learn the lesson of the Samaritan leper who was healed: the way to God’s kingdom is through Jesus. He controls the kingdom’s benefits and represents its power and presence.”⁶
- d. Note how misunderstanding the meaning of this text can lead to 2 totally different views of the Kingdom of God. Many have misunderstood this text and used it as a justification for amillennialism. Yet, even if we grant that the wrong meaning of the text could be true, this text by no means limits the Kingdom of God to the internal, spiritual. Again, this interaction is about the ARRIVAL of the Kingdom, not its subsequent expression and growth.
 - i. Calvin ““That restoration of the Church,” he tells us, “which God has promised, must be looked for *within*; for, by quickening his elect into a

⁴ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1415). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁵ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1416–1417). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁶ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1417–1418). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

heavenly newness of life, he establishes his kingdom *within them*.” And thus he indirectly reproves the stupidity of the Pharisees, because they aimed at nothing but what was earthly and fading. It must be observed, however, that Christ speaks only of the beginnings of the kingdom of God; for we now begin to be formed anew by the Spirit after the image of God, in order that our entire renovation, and that of the whole world, may afterwards follow in due time.”⁷

V. Questions to know, love and obey God

⁷ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 212). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.