

THE KINGDOM OF GOD—WITHIN YOU!

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In Luke 17, the Pharisees came to the Lord and desired to know when the kingdom of God should come (v. 20). The Lord's answer, in that verse, shows us that these men were expecting some sort of dynamic and physical upheaval; indeed, it was a Jewish hope that there would be a deliverer to come, with a mighty army equipped with every carnal device of warfare, and with great power to drive the heathen Romans from their land. We might here note that some of these same false concepts are held by a large part of the religious world—this embraced in the doctrine of premillennialism. Having convinced themselves that what they desired was just what God would supply, the Jews then very easily took the spiritual prophecies concerning the Messiah and the coming kingdom, and literalized them in keeping with their own wills.

But Jesus answered back, **“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation”** (v.20). What does this mean? It certainly does not mean that the coming of the kingdom could not be identified, nor does it mean that when the kingdom was to come that there would be nothing that men could see or hear. Indeed, Jesus also said that some in His own generation, who saw and heard him, would not **“taste of death, till they have SEEN the kingdom of God come with POWER”** (Mark 9:1). We study in the New Testament until we come to the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, and there were things then seen and heard whereby men could see the fulfillment of Mark 9:1. Here, in Luke 17, Jesus was indicating that the coming of the kingdom would not involve some outside temporal power, entering that land, engaging in physical conflict, routing heathen armies, so that men could say, **“By this battle, by this conflict, we declare that the kingdom of God has come!”**

So, the Lord continues and states this, **“For behold, the kingdom of God is WITHIN you”** (v. 21). Thinking of his own people, among whom he was living and working at the time, Jesus declares that within themselves, within their own nature and makeup, within their own spirits, was the potential God would use in bringing the kingdom into this world. The kingdom, or church, was established in Acts 2, and who were those in the audience? Jews! And, in the establishing of the kingdom, what was done? The saving word (Jam. 1:31) was preached to men and upon the changes within them (the acquiring of faith, and their penitence regarding their sins in baptism), and the sins were removed (Acts 2:38), and thus they were saved (v. 47), and they made up the church of the Lord, the kingdom of God. The potential was within them all the while.

We dare not leave this point without making current application to us all. Whatever God expects of spiritual men, in His kingdom, to be what the Lord wants us to be, is **WITHIN** us. Moreover, He, by His will, His word, can bring that out and develop us to be more and more spiritual, but it requires **OUR WILLS** also. To be spiritual is within us. To be evangelistic is within us. To be a great and godly influence is within us. To be fine Bible students is within us. To be a congregation noted for soundness and loyalty to the Word is within us. To be extremely faithful in our worship and study services is within us all. To be liberal and cheerful in our giving is also within us all. Truly, whatever the Lord desires for us to be in His kingdom is **WITHIN US!**~

Deceased