

Luke 17:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he 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:

Analysis

Pharisees question about the kingdom: 'And when he 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.' The Pharisees 'demanded' (ἐπερωτηθεὶς, eperōtētheis, were questioning/interrogating) about 'when the kingdom of God should come' (πότε ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, pote erchetai hē basileia tou Theou). They expected a visible, political, military messianic kingdom overthrowing Rome. Jesus' answer contradicts this: 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation' (οὐκ ἔρχεται μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, ouk erchetai meta paratērēseōs). The term 'observation' means careful watching for visible signs. The kingdom doesn't arrive with trumpet blasts, military conquest, or political revolution but through spiritual transformation invisible to physical eyes.

Historical Context

Jewish messianic expectations focused on visible restoration of Davidic monarchy, Jerusalem's exaltation, and Israel's dominance. These hopes fueled revolutionary movements throughout the first century. Jesus consistently disappointed these expectations, teaching that His kingdom was 'not of this world' (John 18:36). The kingdom came through His death and resurrection, establishing spiritual reign over hearts before eventual visible return in glory. The Pharisees' question reflected political hopes; Jesus' answer redirected to spiritual realities. This teaching prepared disciples for a kingdom that advances through gospel

proclamation, not military might; through suffering service, not political power; through death and resurrection, not revolution.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How did Jesus' teaching about the kingdom's nature contradict Jewish expectations?
2. What does it mean that the kingdom comes 'not with observation'—without visible signs?
3. How should this teaching shape Christian expectations about the church's role in politics and culture?

Interlinear Text

Ἐπερωτηθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν Φαρισαίων πότε ἔρχεται
when he was demanded And of the Pharisees when cometh
G1905 G1161 G5259 G5330 G4219 G2064

ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν οὐκ
G3588 The kingdom G3588 of God he answered them and said not
G932 G2316 G611 G846 G2532 G2036 G3756

ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως
cometh G3588 The kingdom G3588 of God with observation
G2064 G932 G2316 G3326 G3907

Additional Cross-References

John 18:36 (Kingdom): Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Luke 19:11 (Kingdom): And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Daniel 2:44 (Kingdom): And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Luke 16:16 (Kingdom): The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Zechariah 4:6 (Parallel theme): Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Luke 10:11 (Kingdom): Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.
