

Luke 21:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Analysis

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Jesus applies the parable explicitly—houtōs kai hymeis (οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, "so also you"), drawing direct parallel between natural observation and prophetic discernment. The temporal clause hotan idēte tauta ginomena (ὅταν ἴδητε ταῦτα γινόμενα, "when you see these things happening") references the prophetic signs just described (vv. 7-28)—wars, earthquakes, persecution, Jerusalem's destruction, cosmic disturbances, Christ's return. The present participle ginomena (γινόμενα, "happening") emphasizes ongoing fulfillment—not all at once but progressively.

The command is decisive: ginōskete hoti engys estin hē basileia tou theou (γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, "know that the kingdom of God is near"). The imperative ginōskete (γινώσκετε, "know") requires certain knowledge, not speculation. The phrase engys estin (ἐγγύς ἐστιν, "is near") echoes verse 30's "summer is near"—temporal proximity, not distant futurity. Hē basileia tou theou (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, "the kingdom of God") here refers to the kingdom's consummation, Christ's visible reign (v. 27), the full manifestation of God's rule already inaugurated in Jesus' first coming.

This verse establishes a dual application: near-term fulfillment in AD 70 (the kingdom advancing through Jerusalem's destruction, ending the old covenant age) and ultimate fulfillment at Christ's return (the kingdom consummated in visible,

universal glory). Both fulfillments validate Jesus' prophetic authority and demonstrate that observable signs should produce expectant readiness.

Historical Context

Jesus' disciples witnessed the first fulfillment within their generation—Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 validated His prophetic authority and marked a decisive transition in redemptive history. The temple's destruction ended the Levitical system, demonstrating that the old covenant was obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). The kingdom advanced as the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire unhindered by Jerusalem's religious-political opposition. Yet the ultimate fulfillment awaits—when cosmic signs appear, believers should recognize Christ's imminent return and the kingdom's full manifestation. Early church lived in expectant readiness; successive generations have maintained this posture, recognizing that history's trajectory points toward Christ's visible reign.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the kingdom's 'nearness' apply to both AD 70 fulfillment and ultimate consummation at Christ's return?
2. What does Jesus' command to 'know' rather than speculate teach about the certainty and clarity of prophetic signs?
3. How should awareness that the kingdom is 'nigh at hand' affect Christian priorities, values, and daily living?

Interlinear Text

οὕτως	καὶ	ὕμεῖς	ὅταν	ἴδητε	ταῦτα	γινόμενα	
So	likewise	ye	when	ye see	these things	come to pass	
G3779	G2532	G5210	G3752	G1492	G5023	G1096	
γινώσκετε	ὅτι	ἐγγύς	ἐστίν	ἡ	βασιλεία	τοῦ	θεοῦ
know ye	that	nigh at hand	is	G3588	the kingdom	G3588	of God
G1097	G3754	G1451	G2076		G932		G2316

Additional Cross-References

James 5:9 (Parallel theme): Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Hebrews 10:37 (Parallel theme): For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

1 Peter 4:7 (Parallel theme): But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.