

## The DAILY JESUS NEWS #224

### Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem

#### The Kingdom of God is Within You

LK 17.20-21

20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied,

*"The kingdom of God is not coming in a way that can be observed outwardly, 21 nor will people say, 'Look! it is here' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God exists within you."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere on the Road to Jerusalem
Timeline	March (Month 38)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	C. Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem
Title	2. Jesus Declares: "The Kingdom of God is Within You"

#### COMMENT:

Today's reading begins an important section of teaching by Jesus on the coming of the Kingdom (17.20-37). Jesus repeated almost all of the same content in his extended "Olivet Discourse" (MT 24-25) one month later during Passion Week. However, today's text is especially important because it captures a crucial defining characteristic of the Kingdom of God according to Jesus, which is repeated nowhere else in the four gospels: ***"the kingdom of God exists within you."***

The nature of the kingdom of God was one of the most important issues in Jesus' ministry, because his view was so different from the common popular understanding of the people he ministered to. They were looking for a military-political-geographical authority of a ruler patterned on the reign of King David, who would overthrow the power of Rome and rule the entire world like Alexander the Great had done three centuries earlier. They expected the Messiah to enter Jerusalem and re-establish the throne of David there, and then extend it out to rule all the nations with military force. The kingdom of God was totally an earthly kingdom to them.

In today's reading Jesus defined the kingdom of God as an inner reality, rather than an outward one. The reign and authority of God is universal, over all his creation to be sure, but Jesus taught that it had to be believed and received inwardly, in our hearts and minds, where God reigns invisibly by his Spirit within our inmost being.

This declaration of the kingdom as existing within us, rather than outwardly in a geographically-based political system, was a crucial statement by Jesus that clarified the essential nature of the kingdom for us.

While Jesus never repeated this specific statement in the gospels, he later expressed the same point of view in the first interrogation before Pilate of his trial, on the last day of his life: ***"My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. However, my kingdom is from a different place."*** JN 18.36

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Jesus is the King of Kings, and the LORD of all Lords. All authority and power that exists in all the universe resides fully in him. However, he reigns in love, not with the unilateral exertion of his power, so that his reign must be believed and joyfully received inwardly by his servants. So the kingdom of God is invisible, and resides within us, even as it is expressed outwardly in loving relationships with God, self, and others according to his will.

The kingdom therefore transforms us first from the inside of our thoughts, attitudes, and behavior...working outward into our actions. All the other kingdoms of this world use power in an attempt to control us from the outside, working inward.

This bedrock understanding of the nature of the kingdom of God pervades every other aspect Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom, making this a crucial text that every disciple should know well.

We should also note in closing that the Pharisees continued to dog Jesus' steps, even in this remote border region between Galilee and Samaria. The Pharisees never let up their pressure on our Lord. He, in turn, lived in love, peace, and joy—even in the presence of his enemies.

### APPLICATION:

The kingdom of God stands in juxtaposition to the common thinking and behavior of the culture that surrounds us. The only way to live by its principles and uphold its values is to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus' life and teachings as the visible, physical expression of its invisible, inner nature. Because the kingdom of God is within us, we take it everywhere we go, and it can influence all that we are and do.

*How does the kingdom of God within you need to direct your words and actions today?*

*How can you embrace Jesus' reign in and through you by His Spirit in new ways today?*