

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1033

***God's Royal Majesty***

March 26, 2010

***Is Among You***

**(20) ... He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:  
(21) Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is  
within you.** (Luke 17:20-21 KJV)

**(20) Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was  
coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be  
observed; (21) nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the  
kingdom of God is in your midst."** (Luke 17:20-21 NASB)

**And having been asked by the Pharisees when God's kingdom was coming, he answered  
them, and said, "The kingdom of God comes not with outward show; nor shall they say,  
'Behold here! or there!' for behold, God's Royal Majesty is among you."** (Luke 17:20-21  
BWD)

A time came when the Pharisees, the religious elite of the day, demanded that Jesus tell them when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus answered them that it was not coming with outward show or observation, for it was within or among. But this raises the question: Within or among what?

It is safe to state that many have taken this verse to mean that Jesus was telling the Pharisees that the kingdom was within them individually, and because of this one statement, the kingdom resides in every believer today. Consequently, many believe that the Pentecostal-era church of the last 2,000 years must and will overtake the nations with the kingdom of God, that is, "take the nations for Christ" and establish His kingdom on earth, and this will occur apart from the first resurrection and the experience of Tabernacles when the conquerors receive immortal, celestial, spiritual, glorified bodies [i.e., redemption of our body (Romans 8:23)] and are placed as sons in the kingdom of Christ. In other words, many believe that the church will rise up in greater glory during **this present wicked (evil) eon (age)** [Paul's words, not mine (Galatians 1:4 CV)]. After all, as the thinking goes, believers have everything they need within them, including all the power of God, to seize the nations for Christ. Thus, we hear some stating that "a greater glory of the Lord will be manifested soon," "a greater release of His presence into the earth is coming," "the wealth of the nations is coming to the church," and "fresh fire is coming upon the church," to name a few, and these things will occur in our present era.

I am not being critical of my fellow brethren for holding such thinking. Other than the "fresh fire" thing (see issue #04-1029, March 22, 2010, *Cold or Hot, But Not Lukewarm*) and the overemphasis on wealth, I agree with them; but I do not agree that it will occur in our present age while we continue to occupy **the body of this death** (Romans 7:24 NASB), **the body of our humiliation** (Philippians 3:21 ASV), that is, **this corruptible** (1 Corinthians 15:54 KJV), as Paul variously called it. Simply, I believe they are seeking and longing for something that cannot occur in this eon (age) but will most definitely occur in the coming eon that commences with the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Tabernacles. They are trying to bring the 7<sup>th</sup> day into the 6<sup>th</sup> day and fail to see that it is about coming into the 7<sup>th</sup> day and bringing the 7<sup>th</sup> day into the 8<sup>th</sup> day. Confused? See issues #04-1011 through #04-1015, January-February 2010, on the *Seventh and Eighth Days*.

Now, let us consider the above verses as presented in three different translations, with particular emphasis on the last part of verse 21. A review of 26 translations revealed that 13 contain the phrase "within you" and 13 contain the phrase "among you" or a similar variation. Thus, the translators seem to be evenly split on their interpretation of what Jesus was telling the Pharisees about the coming of the kingdom of God.

First, we need to realize that Jesus was speaking to the religious elite of the day that would send Him to the cross for declaring that He is the Son of God and God's King. How could the kingdom of God reside within ones that rejected the very King that the prophets had promised? The fact of the matter is that Jesus announced to the collective nation of rebellious Judahites, the bad figs that rejected the Messiah, that **“the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (plural) and given to a people, producing the fruit of it”** (Matthew 21:43 NASB). This came about on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the good figs of Judah, the ones who believed on Jesus.

Second, the pronoun *you* can be in either the singular or the plural. In this case, the Greek word is plural, which means that the kingdom was within or among the Pharisees collectively, not individually. Thus, He was within or in the midst of or among the collective nation (entire group) of Judahites.

Third, the kingdom of God had come without observation because the King Himself was walking in their midst or among them, that is, within or among the bad figs of Judah (Jeremiah 24; Matthew 21:19) who were looking for a political kingdom to be manifested in their day that would remove the yoke of Roman rule from them. Jesus declared that there would be no manifestation or sign of a political kingdom then or in the future, for that matter. Why? Because His kingdom is of an entirely different nature or character; it is of a different realm (John 18:36). It is not political; it is righteousness and justice. Take note that in the verses that follow verse 21 (Luke 17:22-37), Jesus, in fact, did offer signs of His coming as the Son of Man, a future event when His kingdom will be manifested on earth.

Fourth, to add to this third point, let us consider commentary by two well-known commentators and translators of Scripture.

Benjamin Wilson's *The Emphatic Diaglott*, 1942, states:

In this verse it has been found necessary to depart from the usual signification of *hee basileia tou theou*, the KINGDOM OF GOD, and render it as in the text. That this rendering is admissible and correct, see Note on Matthew 3:2. *Basileia* here refers to the person to whom the title and honor of king belonged, rather than to his *territory* or *kingdom*. Prof. Whittings, an able Hebrew and Greek scholar, says, this clause in the 21<sup>st</sup> verse ought to be rendered “the *king* is among you.” Dr. A. Clarke in a note on the 21<sup>st</sup> verse evidently understood this to relating to Christ. He says, “Perhaps those Pharisees, thought, that Messiah was kept secret, in some private place, known only to some of their rulers; and that by and by he should be proclaimed in a similar way to that which Joash was by Jehoiada the priest. See account, 2 Chronicles 23:1-11.”

To complete the thought, here is the note for Matthew 3:2, as referenced in the above:

*Basileia* means kingly power, authority, royal dignity, majesty, &c., as well as kingdom, realm, or reign. The prophet Daniel uses kings and kingdoms synonymously, (Daniel 2:44); so also the evangelists. See Matthew 21:5, 9; Mark 11:9, 10; Luke 19:33; and Zechariah 9:9. John's mission was “to go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways,” Luke 1:76); and to point out the Messiah. See John 1:6-8, 29-31, 34; Acts 13:24, 25. Therefore, he called on the people to “Reform, because the Majesty of the heavens (God's Anointed) has come.”

E.W. Bullinger's *The Companion Bible*, 1922, states:

“within = in the midst of, or, among: i.e. already there in the Person of the King (whose presence marks a kingdom). Greek *entos*, the same meaning as Greek *en* (Appendix 104.8), wit the plural rendered “among” 115 times in N.T. The same meaning as in Matthew 12:28, John 1:26. you = you yourselves.”

Thus, it seems apparent to me that Jesus declared that He was standing and walking in their midst as the King. He was not stating that He or the kingdom resided in them individually in some mystical way, a concept totally foreign to the Pharisees, as well as to most of the Judahites of that day. They were looking for a king to come and reign over Israel like all other kings that reigned over kingdoms of the world. The concept of Christ or His kingdom, for that matter, residing within the individual did not come until after the cross, not before.

This leads to a question that will be taken up in the next issue: Does the kingdom reside in believers today, and, if so, how and in what way?