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Luke 17: 21

Kittel refers to the saying of Jesus in this passage as "dieses vielbehandelte und vielgequaelte Jesuswort."¹⁾ He is right. Just a little research reveals that many have written on this passage and that their interpretations do not agree. Nevertheless, though it may never be possible in this life to determine with absolute finality what the true meaning of this passage is, and though some readers of this article may not subscribe to this writer's findings, the undersigned ventures to submit his own investigation.

The chief crux of the passage lies in the preposition ἐντός. Does the Savior mean to say, "The Kingdom is *within*, i. e., *inside* of, you, in your hearts"? Or does He mean to say, "The Kingdom of God is *among* you, in your midst"?

Respecting these two possible interpretations, authorities are fairly evenly divided, though perhaps the foremost New Testament scholars favor the meaning *among*, in the midst of. Authorities which support the meaning *within* are the following:

1. Lexicographers: Cremer, Liddell-Scott (latest edition by Jones and McKenzie). The interpreter, however, who insists that ἐντός ὑμῶν means in *your hearts* because Liddell-Scott favor *within* must not be overenthusiastic. A careful examination of the examples in Liddell-Scott will soon tell him that in a good number of them ἐντός is used in a wider sense, several times in the sense of *among*. A parallel to the Greek usage of ἐντός meaning *within* is our English word *within*, which we by no means always employ in the sense *inside of*. We say, "The prisoners of war are confined within barbed wire fences," or, "The platoon moved to within ten miles of enemy artillery fire," or, "I shall see you within two hours." Surely, in the first of these instances we do not mean to say that the prisoners are confined inside the wire and the steel posts, but that they are inside the space enclosed by the fences.

2. Grammarians: Moulton-Howard;²⁾ A. T. Robertson.³⁾

3. Commentators: Chrysostom, Theophylact, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Olshausen, Godet, Farrar, Gustaf Dalman.⁴⁾

4. Translators: Luther (*inwendig in euch*); King James Version (marginal reading: *among you*); English Revision (marginal reading: *in the midst of you*); American Standard (marginal reading: *in*

1) Gerhard Kittel, *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, p. 587.

2) *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. II, p. 330.

3) *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed., p. 641.

4) *Die Worte Jesu*, 2d ed., pp. 116—118.

your midst). Modern translations which have *within* are: Weymouth, *Twentieth Century New Testament*, Robertson, Goodspeed, and Charles B. Williams.

Among authorities who translate ἐντός ὑμῶν with *among you* or some such equivalent I find:

1. Lexicographers: Schirlitz, Thayer, Preuschen-Bauer, Kittel.
2. Commentators: Beza, Grotius, Calov, Bengel, Bornemann, Bleek, Hofmann,⁵⁾ Bernhard Weiss in Meyer's commentary, Theodor Zahn, Plummer (ICC), though the last mentioned also allows for the possibility of *within*, and Klostermann.⁶⁾
3. Translators: all Latin versions have *intra vos*; the Curetonian Syriac version. Among modern translations I note Moffatt and Cunningham, though the latter gives in a footnote *within*.

It is obviously futile to rest one's interpretation on the conclusion of a given authority, though it does impress one that such outstanding students of the New Testament as Bengel, Zahn, B. Weiss, and Plummer favor the meaning *among*. Let us therefore brush aside the authorities and ourselves examine the evidence which favors either *within* or *among* as the meaning of ἐντός.

An investigation into the etymology of ἐντός does not get us far. Its Latin cognate is *intus*. Just like the Latin *intus*, so the Greek ἐντός, as the illustrations in Liddell-Scott show, was used in the preclassical and the classical period in the sense of *within, inside of*, and in the sense of *among*.

Ἐντός is a *hapaxlegomenon* in Luke's writings. It occurs only in our passage. Elsewhere in the New Testament it occurs only in Matt. 23:26, where the Savior says to the Pharisee: καθάρισον πρῶτον τὸ ἐντός τοῦ ποτηρίου. It should be noted that in this passage ἐντός is not used as a preposition but as a substantized adverb preceded by the definite article and followed by a genitive. In a related passage, in Luke 11:39, the Savior tells a Pharisee: νῦν ὑμεῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὸ ἔσωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος καθαρίζετε, τὸ δε ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀραγαῆς καὶ πονηρίας. Luke uses τὸ ἔσωθεν and not τὸ ἐντός. This is strange. Was the reason this that Luke, when he wished to say *the inside* preferred τὸ ἔσωθεν to τὸ ἐντός? It would obviously be precarious to draw this inference.

What about the use of ἐντός in the Septuagint? Whatever evidence there may be in the Septuagint ought to prove valuable, since Luke seems to have been well acquainted with this translation. According to Swete,⁷⁾ there are seventeen quotations from

5) *Schriftbeweis*, Vol. II, 2, p. 146.

6) *Das Lukasevangelium*, pp. 237—238. *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, herausgegeben von Hans Lietzmann.

7) *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 391—393.

the Septuagint in Luke's Gospel and twenty-three in Acts. In Hatch and Redpath⁸⁾ I find that ἐντός occurs in the Septuagint eight times, of which one instance is doubtful. The clear cases are: Ps. 38 (39):3; 102 (103):1; 108 (109):22; Song of Sol. 3:10; Sir. 19:26; Is. 16:11; 1 Macc. 4:48. In three of these passages we have the bare ἐντός followed by the genitive of a personal pronoun as μου or αὐτοῦ, and in the remaining four we have ἐντός preceded by the definite article τὰ and followed by a genitive (pronoun or noun). In all seven instances ἐντός clearly means *inside of* (e. g., Ps. 103:1: "all that is *within* me bless His holy name"). On the strength of the Septuagint evidence one might argue that Luke intended ἐντός in Luke 17:21 in the sense of *within*. But this would be precarious, since Luke uses the word but once in both his writings.

I have consulted Moulton-Milligan⁹⁾ and Preisigke.¹⁰⁾ In Moulton-Milligan I find the comment under ἐντός: "We have no citation which throws any light on the much-disputed meaning of ἐντός ὑμῶν in Luke 17:21, but it may be noted that the same phrase occurs in a similar connection in the second of the new sayings of Jesus, P Oxy IV, 654¹⁰⁾: ἡ βασιλῆα τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐντός ὑμῶν [ἐ]στὶν [καὶ] ὅστις ἂν ἑαυτὸν γνῶ ταύτην εὐρη[σει] . . . , where the context favors the translation *within you*." For a different reconstruction of this mutilated saying, see Deissmann.¹¹⁾ On the basis of this saying, Robertson¹²⁾ concludes: "In one of the new *Logia of Jesus* we have a similar saying in a context that makes *within* necessary and would seem to settle the point about the passage in Luke: ἡ βασιλῆα τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐντός ὑμῶν ἐστὶν." But a glance at the reconstructed text in Moulton-Milligan and a comparison of it with that suggested by Deissmann makes it evident that both reconstructions are highly subjective and arbitrary and that the mutilated *logion* sheds no light whatsoever on the meaning of ἐντός in the *logion* and in Luke. The other examples listed by Milligan-Moulton and those in Preisigke at once suggest that also in the papyri and in inscriptions ἐντός was used in a variety of ways, all of which were current in classical Greek.

What about the meaning of ἐντός in *koine* writers such as Polybius, Josephus, and others? Robertson says:¹³⁾ "In Polybius ἐντός is always the opposite of ἐκτός." But this looks like one of Robertson's glaring oversimplifications. As we have said above, it all depends upon what *within* actually means in a given case.

8) *Concordance to the Septuagint*.

9) *The Vocabulary of the New Testament, Illustrated from the Papyri*.

10) *Woerterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden*.

11) *Light from the Ancient East*, 4th ed., p. 426 f.

12) *Op. cit.*, p. 641. 13) *Op. cit.*, p. 641.

Those who argue for the meaning of *within* in Luke 17:21 sometimes advance the following consideration. They say that so facile a writer of *koine* Greek as Luke, who draws on a rich vocabulary, moves about freely in a variety of constructions, and writes in a singularly clear style, would have used a word which is unambiguous if he intended to convey the meaning *among*. He would have employed μέσος or a circumlocution containing μέσος. Now, the fact is that Luke frequently uses μέσος and constructions containing μέσος. He uses μέσος in the sense of *among* in Luke 22:55 and Acts 1:18; μέσον in the sense of *among* in Luke 23:15; ἐν μέσῳ in Luke 2:46; 8:7; 10:3; 21:21; 22:27, 55; 24:36; Acts 1:15; 2:22; 4:7; 17:22; 27:21; διὰ μέσου in Luke 4:30; 17:11; εἰς τὸ μέσον in 4:35; 5:19 and 6:8; ἐκ μέσου in 17:33; 23:10; κατὰ μέσον in 27:27. Others have argued that Luke would have used μεταξὺ to express *among* as he does in 11:51; 16:26; Acts 12:6; 13:42; 15:9. How purposeless it is, however, to suggest a preposition which Luke should have used if he intended to convey the sense *among* becomes evident when one considers that Luke might also have used the simple ἐν or εἰς in the sense of *among*. He uses ἐν in the sense of *among* in 1:1, 25; 7:16, 28; 9:48; 22:24, and about twenty times in Acts. He uses εἰς in the sense of *among* in 8:14; 10:36; 24:47; Acts 2:22; 4:17, etc. Most assuredly Luke had a wide choice of prepositions and circumlocutions which he could have employed to express in unmistakable language the idea *among*. But the stubborn fact is that he chose, by divine inspiration, the preposition ἐντός, and absolutely no suggestion as to what Luke might have done can alter the fact that he used ἐντός and used it advisedly.

It is obvious that it is impossible to decide on the meaning of ἐντός in Luke 17:21 on purely lexicographical grounds. Neither the etymology of the word nor its usage in classical and *koine* Greek can decide the issue. Its meaning in Luke 17:21 must be determined on the basis of the context in which it occurs. To the context let us go.

The Pharisees approached the Savior with the question: "When is the Kingdom of God coming?" There is no indication whatsoever in the text that these Pharisees meant to trap Jesus in His words. "In exegesis, too," as Lenski¹⁴ observes, "it is a sin to put anything but the best construction upon men." It was a legitimate question to ask. We remember that both John the Baptist and Jesus Himself had said in the early part of their ministry, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). They had not in simple and unmistakable words said that it had arrived. Even at the height of His ministry Jesus spoke somewhat obscurely about the arrival of the Kingdom, as when on one occasion He said

14) *Interpretation of Luke*, p. 488.

to the Pharisees: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you" (Luke 11:20). This was a conditional statement. We recall that even in the closing week of the Savior's ministry His followers were still expecting the arrival of the Kingdom, as we gather from Luke 19:11, where Luke tells us: "Now they hearing these things, He furthermore spoke a parable, because He was near to Jerusalem, and they were thinking that the Kingdom of God was about to make its appearance at once." We remember also that from the point of view of Salome and her two sons James and John the Kingdom was still to make its appearance (Matt. 20:20, 21).

From the Savior's reply to the question of the Pharisees we gather, however, that these Pharisees were not so much interested in the exact year and month and day and hour of the arrival of the Kingdom, but rather in historical occurrences or natural phenomena which from their point of view would necessarily have to signalize its appearance. Jesus at one time said to the multitudes (Luke 12:54-56): "Whenever ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say: There cometh a shower. And so it is. And when ye see the southwind blow, ye say: There will be heat. And it cometh to pass. Hypocrites! Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" Surely, the people about Jesus should have known that the Kingdom of God was already present among them. The mighty miracles which Jesus performed, the message of spiritual deliverance and hope which He preached, the singular agreement of what He said and did with Old Testament Scripture, should have been ample evidence that in Him the Kingdom of God had made its appearance. Indeed, John the Baptist had in the very early part of his ministry told the Pharisees, "I baptize with water, but there standeth One among you, whom ye know not, He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (John 1:26, 27). But, as we know, most of the people who came into contact with Jesus did not recognize Him as the Messianic King. They were blinded by their prejudices and unbelief and thus did not appreciate that the Kingdom of God was in their midst. For the close relation between the King Jesus and His Kingdom which the Gospels sometimes seem to identify it is interesting to compare Mark 11:9, 10 with Matt. 21:9; Luke 19:38; Mark 10:29 with Matt. 19:29 and Luke 18:29; and Luke 9:27 with Matt. 16:28.

Therefore Jesus replies, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." The word παρατήρησις does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, but it is frequent in other *koine* writings and is used by medical men of the observance of symptoms of diseases. The phrase μετὰ παρατήρησεως therefore means "so that it can be

observed." According to the Savior, the Kingdom of God does not come signalized by historical occurrences or natural phenomena. But that is not the only characteristic of God's kingdom. The Savior continues (v. 21): "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there!" He means to say that the Kingdom of God is not of such a nature that when it has arrived people can definitely fix it locally and spatially. People will not say: "Behold, it is here," or "there." As H. J. Allen¹⁵ observes: "There would be nothing to see in connection with the coming of the Kingdom such that anyone could say, 'It is here,' or 'there'; it would not come in such a manner as to be noticeable either in point of time or locality, as they imagined; it would not be ushered in melodramatically to the world."

And now the Savior adds the reason. He repeats the "behold," as though He means to emphasize the importance of the truth He is about to convey. And He repeats the subject, "The Kingdom of God," as though He means to give still further weight to the words He is about to utter. He says, "The Kingdom of God is ἐντὸς ὑμῶν." What else can these words mean but: "The Kingdom of God is here, it is among you, in your midst, but you do not see it, you do not recognize in Me the King of that Kingdom, and you do not see the operations of this Kingdom wherever men receive Me as their King and Savior." In short, here we have a solemn declaration on the part of the Savior, clear and direct, that His Kingdom has arrived, is among men, but, as the words preceding the statement suggest, it is a Kingdom whose presence cannot be appreciated by ordinary sense experience. It is possible for men to tell when a hurricane or tornado is on the way, and men can determine by signs in nature the arrival of spring; but man cannot determine the coming of the Kingdom. "The Kingdom of God," says the Savior elsewhere, "is as if a man should cast seed into the ground and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how" (Mark 4:26, 27).

Luke and the other Gospel writers never speak of the Kingdom of God as being in the hearts of men. We are told that people are "in the Kingdom" (Luke 7:28), that the disciples "know the mysteries of the Kingdom" (8:10), that the disciples should "preach the Kingdom," (9:2), that theirs "is the Kingdom of God" (6:20); "that people shall see the Kingdom of God" (9:27); that no man . . . "is fit for the Kingdom of God" (9:62); that the "Kingdom of God comes" (11:2); that the disciples should "seek the Kingdom of God" (12:31); that "the Father . . . gives the Kingdom" (12:32); that the believers "shall sit down in the Kingdom of God" (13:29); that

15) The Apocalyptic Discussion in St. Luke 17. *The Expositor*, series nine, 1926, p. 60.

people must "receive the Kingdom as a little child" (18:17); that "people enter the Kingdom of God" (18:24); that "Joseph of Arimathea . . . waited for the Kingdom of God" (23:51). But we are never told that the Kingdom is in the hearts of men.

It must be remembered, too, that Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees. It seems difficult to assume that Jesus would have said to the Pharisees, "The Kingdom of God is within you, in your hearts," when He had said to them on another occasion, "Your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness" (Luke 11:39). If it is urged that the ἰμῶν need not be limited to the Pharisees, but has a wide meaning and refers specifically to the disciples, then one overlooks v. 22, where Luke, continuing the Savior's discourse on the Kingdom of God, explicitly tells us, "And He said unto His disciples."

To be sure, as has been indicated, the Kingdom of God is not something which can be experienced by our sense organs. It is, as Paul says, "not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). Both interpretations considered above guarantee its invisibility. It is a spiritual kingdom. And being a matter of the spirit, of the heart and the mind, of faith, it is indeed invisible, and it is *within* the regenerated Christian. This, however, is not the immediate import of the Savior's word in Luke 17:21, as the above investigation has, so I trust, demonstrated.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

Geography of the Bible in Relation to Inspiration

(A Conference Paper)

I. Introduction

The connection between geography and the doctrine of inspiration, at least as far as this group is concerned, seems to be the sentence in the first paragraph of the Brief Statement of Missouri, which reads: "Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, *geographical*, and other secular matters, John 10:35."

This doctrine of verbal inspiration is still mistaken to mean inspiration by dictation, mechanical inspiration. Now, it is true that the Church Fathers and some of the old Lutheran theologians called the sacred writers penmen of the Holy Ghost, His recorders, scribes, amanuenses, and the like. But we make these expressions say more than they were intended to say when we ridicule them as implying a mechanical inspiration. The terms should imply no more and no less than that the writers wrote the Word of God,