

Difficult Scriptures

I. Scripture: Luke 17:21

II. How This Verse Is Misused By Some

Some say this verse means the Kingdom of God is not literal, but something merely "in the hearts of men."

III. True Explanation

- A. Notice the context of this verse. Jesus was talking to the Pharisees (verse 20). In Matthew 23:15-19, He called them hypocrites and blind fools. A number of them will never be in God's Kingdom (Luke 13:27-28). Christ was not saying the Kingdom of God was in the hearts of those self-righteous, hypocritical Pharisees.
- B. The Kingdom of God cannot be in the heart of any human being. I Corinthians 15:50 shows that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.
- C. In order for anything to be considered a kingdom, four requirements must be met: 1) a king or ruler, 2) subjects or people being ruled, 3) a territory and 4) laws by which the people are governed. These cannot be in the heart of a person. Certainly no one can read Daniel 2:36-45 and doubt that the Kingdom of God is a literal kingdom.
- D. The Greek word translated "within" in Luke 17:21 is entos. This word can also be rendered "among" or, as the Englishman's Greek New Testament has it, "in the midst of." The marginal references of many Bibles show "among" as an alternate translation. Jesus Christ, as the representative of God's Kingdom, was standing among them or in the midst of them. The Jews were looking for a Messiah to bring the Kingdom with power in their own day, and hence did not believe Christ was that Messiah. Christ's statement here was intended to tell them He was the Messiah and that they were overlooking Him in their spiritual ignorance.

