

The Kingdom of God is *within* you. One of the best-kept secrets of all

The scripture “**the Kingdom of God is within you**” comes from:

Luke 17:20–21 (KJV)

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

*Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you.**”*

A few quick notes on that passage:

- Some translations phrase it differently. For example, instead of "within you," some say “**in your midst**” or “**among you.**” This has led to **theological debates**, but the **Greek word used is "entos"** (ἐντός), which most literally means “**inside**” or “**within.**”
- Jesus is speaking to **Pharisees**, which complicates how some interpret the phrase—whether he meant “*within your hearts*” or “*in the midst of you*” because *He* (the King) was standing there.
- But early Christian mystics and many modern readers understand this verse more **spiritually**: that the Kingdom isn’t an outward place or event to be watched for—but a **present reality**, awakened **within** the soul.

1. The Original Greek Word – "entos" (ἐντός)

The key word here is ἐντός (*entos*), used only **twice** in the entire New Testament.

In **Luke 17:21**, it is translated in KJV as “**within you.**”

In **Matthew 23:26**, it’s used when Jesus tells the Pharisees to **clean the inside of the cup**—“cleanse first that which is *within* (*entos*) the cup and the platter.”

So what does *entos* mean?

Classical Greek usage (like in Plato, Aristotle): “*within,*” “*inside,*” “*in the soul*”

Koine Greek (the NT dialect): still carries the “**internal**” meaning

Strong’s Concordance: “*inside, within (as opposed to outside)*”

- **Conclusion:** the *literal and oldest Greek meaning* is **internal**—“*within*” you.

2. Early Christian Interpretation

The Early Mystics and Desert Fathers (2nd–4th century):

Took “within you” *literally* and **spiritually**, teaching that: The Kingdom of God is found through **inner purification, prayer,** and **union with Christ within the soul.**

Church Fathers like Origen (3rd century):

Believed that the **logos (Word)** of God dwells *in the soul*, and the Kingdom is found through **spiritual awakening**—*not external signs.*

- So: early Christianity had a strong **mystical, inward interpretation.**

3. Modern Translation Controversy – “Among You” vs. “Within You”

Why do some translations say “among you”?

Because Jesus was speaking to the **Pharisees**, and some argue He wouldn’t claim the Kingdom is *within* people who oppose Him.

Thus, they translate *entos* more figuratively: “the Kingdom is **in your midst**” (meaning: *I am here, or the reign of God is present*).

- **BUT**—this is a **theological decision**, not a linguistic one. There is **no strong linguistic evidence** that *entos* ever meant

“among” in Greek usage. The **more common Greek word for “among”** is *en mesō* (ἐν μέσῳ)—and **Luke doesn't use that here.**

What's the most accurate, oldest reading?

Based on the **original Greek, usage across Scripture, and early Christian interpretation**, the **most accurate and original** reading of Luke 17:21 is: **“The Kingdom of God is within you.”**

That doesn't mean Jesus was saying the Pharisees were enlightened —it means the Kingdom was present and accessible *inside each person*, though many were blind to it.

Kingdom of God, and Kingdom of Heaven

From a biblical perspective, **“Kingdom of God”** and **“Kingdom of Heaven”** are generally considered **synonymous**, not two separate things — especially when comparing the Gospels. However, their phrasing and usage do reflect different emphases based on the audience and context.

1. Usage by Gospel Writers:

- **“Kingdom of Heaven”** appears almost **exclusively in the Gospel of Matthew** (~32 times).
- **“Kingdom of God”** is used in **Mark, Luke, and John**, and also by Paul in his letters.

Why does Matthew prefer “Kingdom of Heaven”?

Matthew was writing primarily to a **Jewish audience**, who often avoided directly saying the name of **God** out of reverence. So “Heaven” was used as a **reverent euphemism** — a way of saying “God” without saying “God.”

Example comparison:

- **Matthew 5:3** – “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the **Kingdom of Heaven.**”
- **Luke 6:20** – “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the **Kingdom of God.**”

2. Are there differences in meaning?

Some scholars have **speculated** distinctions:

- That “Kingdom of God” refers to God’s **universal reign** over all creation,
- And “Kingdom of Heaven” refers more to the **messianic, future, or spiritual aspect** of the kingdom.

But these distinctions are **not consistently supported** by the text. In context, both terms describe:

- The **rule and reign** of God,
- The **breaking in of God's rule through Christ,**
- And the **invitation to live under that reign** now and into eternity.

3. Jesus Himself likely used one consistent Aramaic phrase.

Jesus spoke Aramaic, not Greek. So whether the Gospel writer translated that phrase as “Kingdom of God” or “Kingdom of Heaven” depended more on **the author’s audience and style** than on Jesus using different terms.

Conclusion:

They are not two separate kingdoms.
They are two ways of expressing the same divine reality: The active reign of God through Christ, present now and to be fully revealed.

Similar Ideas in Non-Canonical Texts

While the *exact phrase* doesn't appear word-for-word in the extracanonical books, **similar concepts are definitely present**—especially in early Christian mystical or Gnostic writings.

Example:

In the **Gospel of Thomas** (Saying 3), it says:

“The kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you.”

This is very close in meaning and expresses the Kingdom as a present, internal reality rather than a distant or future event.

Other Gnostic texts similarly emphasize the Kingdom as **an inner, spiritual state**, accessed through self-knowledge or awakening. Not in some far-off realm, not earned by perfection, not locked behind priests or rituals or the approval of men—but *already within*.

That one simple truth—spoken plainly by Jesus in **Luke 17:21**—has been buried, distorted, institutionalized, and guarded like a threat... because it is.

So why?

It threatens:

- every system that wants power over you
- every fear that says you're not enough
- every lie that says God is far away
- and every structure that keeps people feeling small, divided, or enslaved

It's the kind of secret that was never meant to be kept—but had to be hidden in plain sight, like a treasure in a field, waiting for someone willing to sell all they have to find it.

1. Spiritually – It's a threat to every illusion of separation.

If the Kingdom of God is within you...

- Then you are **not cut off** from God
- Then you don't need a **temple**, a **human mediator**, or a **system** to reach Him
- Then God isn't "**out there**", angry, far away—but **here**, present, near
- Then you are not a **beggar of grace**, but a **bearer of it**

This flips the entire narrative of man's unworthiness on its head. And that's *dangerous*—because so many beliefs and behaviors rely on the assumption that God is distant, holiness is unreachable, and heaven is only found after death.

But what if heaven has been knocking from the *inside* this whole time?

2. Institutionally – It dismantles religious control.

If people awaken to the Kingdom within:

- They stop needing external **permission** to seek God
- They stop **funding fear** and paying to access peace or face shame
- They question why faith is wrapped in **hierarchy, guilt, and performance**

This inner kingdom cannot be tithed, taxed, fenced, or ruled. It doesn't report to churches or religions. It whispers **freedom** in the hearts of those enslaved to systems.

No wonder it was buried.

It makes priests unnecessary, religious rules irrelevant, and souls ungovernable.

3. Personally – It forces us to face the *divine responsibility* within.

If the Kingdom is in me... then I can no longer:

- Blame the world for my lack of peace
- Wait for some other human to save me - God does
- Ignore the *divine image* I carry - everyone has an idea of God

It's terrifying for some. Because if heaven begins here... then so does **hell**, and I must choose which I serve, moment by moment.

Most people were taught they are **empty, flawed, or waiting to be fixed**. But if they truly believed heaven resided within them—what would that *demand* of their life?

So in short:

The truth that the Kingdom is within you...

- **Frees** you from control
- **Restores** your dignity
- **Demands** your courage
- And **destroys** the illusions that feed fear

And *that* is why it remains one of the best-kept secrets of all.

There are several passages in the New Testament where Jesus or the writers express this idea of the Kingdom of God as an inner or present reality, even if they don't say the exact phrase "the kingdom of God is within you." Let's explore some of those together.

1. John 14:20

"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

This verse speaks to a deep indwelling relationship—Jesus describing how God's presence lives within believers, which aligns with the idea that God's reign or Kingdom is not only external but internal.

2. Romans 14:17

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Here Paul points out that the Kingdom isn't about external rules or rituals but about qualities lived and experienced inwardly—righteousness, peace, joy—fruits of the Spirit within.

3. 1 Corinthians 3:16

“Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?”

This verse identifies believers themselves as the temple, meaning God's presence (and by extension His Kingdom) dwells within the individual and the community.

4. Matthew 6:33

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

While not explicitly stating it's “within,” the call to seek the Kingdom suggests an active inward pursuit—an internal transformation, not just an external hope.

5. Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Paul emphasizes the indwelling of Christ, which echoes the Kingdom as an inner spiritual reality.

6. Colossians 1:27

“...Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Again, this points to the presence of the divine Kingdom reality within believers.

7. Luke 11:20

“But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Here Jesus implies the Kingdom’s presence in the midst of people, not necessarily a far-off event, suggesting its active, present reality.

Summary

The New Testament consistently supports the idea that the Kingdom of God is not just a future event or external realm, but also a present, internal reality accessible through the Spirit dwelling within believers, righteousness lived, and the presence of Christ in them.

- 1. What does it mean to you personally that the Kingdom of God is *within* you? How does that change the way you think about your relationship with God?**
- 2. How might recognizing the Kingdom within affect the way we live day-to-day—our decisions, relationships, and priorities?**
- 3. How do you see the difference between seeking God *externally* (in places, people, rituals) versus *internally* (in your heart, spirit)?**
- 4. In what ways can the idea of the Kingdom within inspire us to bring healing, peace, and justice into our communities?**
- 5. How do you reconcile the Kingdom being both a present reality *within us* and a future hope *to come*?**

WHERE GOD GOES - SO DOES HIS KINGDOM

General Description of the Kingdom of God (NT Overview)

The Kingdom of God is not primarily a place, but a reign or rule — God's active and sovereign presence in the world, in people's hearts, and ultimately over all creation.

Key Descriptions of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament

1. It Is Within You / In Your Midst

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

— Luke 17:20–21

Spiritual reality — internal, not geographical.

2. It Is Like a Mustard Seed (Starts Small, Grows Great)

“It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants.”

— Matthew 13:31–32

Begins humbly, grows powerfully.

3. It Is Like Leaven (Transformative)

“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

— Matthew 13:33

Quietly transforms everything it touches.

4. It Belongs to the Humble and Childlike

“Let the little children come to me... for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

— Mark 10:14–15

Received in trust and humility, not pride.

5. It Is a Treasure Worth Everything

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field... then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

— Matthew 13:44

Worth sacrificing everything for.

6. It Comes Not by Force, but by the Spirit

“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight...”

— John 18:36

Spiritual in nature — not established by violence or politics.

7. It Has Already Come, But Not Yet Fully

“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

— Matthew 12:28

Already active through Jesus — and growing — but will be fully revealed in the end.

Revelation 21–22 — Description of the New Jerusalem

1. It Comes Down from Heaven

“I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”

— Revelation 21:2

It's not built by man, but prepared by **God** — a **gift** of grace.

2. God Dwells in the City

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them... and He will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

— Revelation 21:3–4

This is **Emmanuel fulfilled** — God *with us*, forever.

3. The City's Radiance and Foundation

“The city shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.”

— Revelation 21:11

“The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

— Revelation 21:14

The city **radiates divine light** — and its foundation is built on the **apostolic faith**.

4. Its Perfect Measurements

“The city was laid out like a square... 12,000 stadia in length, width and height... The wall was 144 cubits thick.”

— Revelation 21:16–17

A perfect **cube**, like the **Holy of Holies** in the temple — symbolizing total **holiness and unity**.

5. Materials: Pure, Priceless, Symbolic

- **Walls:** Jasper
- **City:** Pure gold, like clear glass
- **Foundations:** Precious stones (jasper, sapphire, emerald, etc.)
- **Gates:** 12 pearls — each gate is **one pearl**
- **Streets:** Gold, transparent like glass

— Revelation 21:18–21

All represent **purity, beauty, and glory** — not just wealth, but **divine perfection**.

6. No Temple — Because God Is There

“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”

— Revelation 21:22

Worship is no longer centered in a building — it’s **face-to-face with God Himself**.

7. No Sun or Moon — God Is the Light

“The city does not need the sun or the moon... for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.”

— Revelation 21:23

Christ is the eternal light, and there is **no night** there.

8. Open Gates, Healed Nations

“Its gates will never be shut... The nations will walk by its light... The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

— Revelation 21:25, 22:2

A place of **peace, unity, and wholeness** — no fear, no division, no curse.

9. River of Life & Tree of Life

“The river of the water of life... flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb... On either side... stood the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit... and the leaves were for the healing of the nations.”

— Revelation 22:1–2

Echoes **Eden**, but now it’s **restored and eternal** — no more fall, only **life unending**.

10. They Will See His Face

“They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads... and they will reign forever and ever.”

— Revelation 22:4–5

The deepest longing of humanity fulfilled — **communion with God, identity restored, and shared rule with Christ.**