

“The Secret Kingdom”

A new “chapter” in our study of the real Jesus from the Gospel of Mark ... The things he said and did raised a second question: not only *Who does he think he is?* But also: *What does he think he's doing?*

And we could answer that question in a lot of ways. Here's one answer: *“He was bringing the kingdom of God to earth!”* See that the first public thing “out of his mouth” was a statement about the kingdom of God:

Mark 1:14-15 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

STARTING LINE: The earthly life of Jesus was the kingdom of God coming into the world.
A whole new way of life: with a new ruler (Lord, Master, Owner ... King)

NOTES:

1. The kingdom of God is a layered reality.

Mark 9:1 “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

Mark 12:34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

2. The kingdom of God is a secret reality! (A reality with a lot of secrets.)

Mark 4:10-11 And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables” Its secrets are revealed to those who enter it.

Mark 9:43-48 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' To enter it is to live. To fail to enter it is to be thrown into hell. To enter is very costly.

Mark 10:13-15 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Mark 10:23-25 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” To enter it is hard for a rich person but it is something a child can do. In fact, it belongs to children and must be received as a child.

But as complicated as it is in its many layers and its many secrets, it is all much more understandable when its greatest secret is learned:

3. The most important secret of the kingdom of God is that Jesus is the king of it!
(The Son of God; the “Christ”) You can almost say, He IS the kingdom. **Mark 1:15** -> The kingdom was at hand because Jesus was at hand!

Here is the explanation of the mystery of entering the kingdom: it's a right relationship with Jesus that is difficult for a rich person and simple for a child.

So to enter it IS life. **John 17:3** And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

And the alternative is hell: the absence of all light and life and joy and pleasure and comfort. And the anguish of knowing you lost all that because you rejected Christ and you always knew it and were always refusing to acknowledge that you did.

ACTIONS: **Mark 1:15**

a) **Change your mind about many things!** As is appropriate with a new king! The next three Sundays. The issue of greatness and ownership and relationships. And the greatest of these is “ownership.” *Whose life is it anyway?* Many things will begin to change when you get THIS figured out! The transformation of your mind being renewed.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

b) **Believe in the good news.** (“entrust yourself entirely to”) Let’s be “hopeful people”! There is a new king! (Compare the hope in the US concerning the election of Barack Obama to the excitement in Canada in the late 60’s over Trudeau!)

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

1 Peter 3:15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you