

Chapter 37

Mark 16:1-8

The Story so Far

Jesus was taken by His own people and put on trial for claiming to be God. The religious leaders wanted Him put to death, but Pilate the Roman Governor found Him innocent. However, in the end he handed Jesus over to be crucified. Jesus the innocent King died in the place of guilty rebellious people. Jesus was the innocent substitute who was punished by His Father instead of guilty rebellious people.

Objectives

- To show that Jesus died, was buried and rose again
- To mention the theories concerning His resurrection and why they can't be true
- To explain the significance of His resurrection

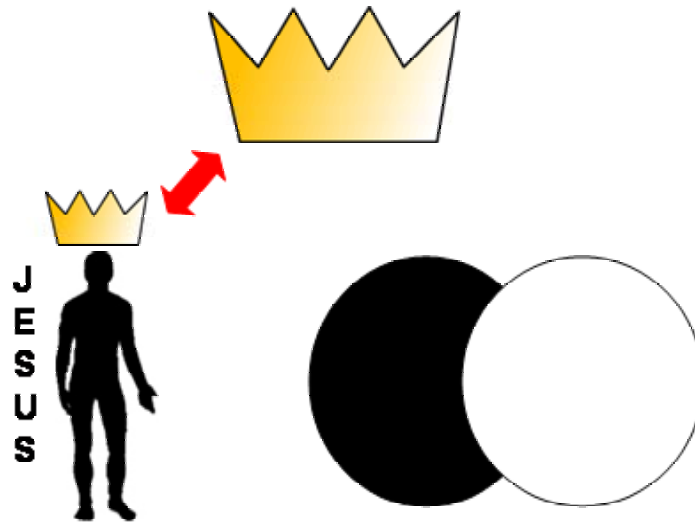
Connections

- In the Bible God makes promises and keeps them. Jesus is the same regarding His resurrection
- God's Kingdom comes when Jesus defeats death and Satan

Summary

Jesus defeats Satan through His death and resurrection, and therefore brings in God's Kingdom – the new age when God's people will live in God's presence, under His rule and blessing.

Victory for the Kingdom



The origin of death (Romans 5:12)

The Bible started with a perfect creation in which there was no death, so where did it come from? Death came into God's good creation when Adam rebelled against God's rule. And the consequences are still with us today. We all die because we have all disobeyed God.

Jesus is dead (Mark 15:42-45)

Jesus died on a Friday. The next day, Saturday, was a special day for the Jewish people called the Sabbath. It was wrong to have a Jewish person on a cross on the Sabbath. Therefore a man called Joseph of Arimathea comes to take Jesus' body off the cross and bury him. Joseph is waiting for God's Kingdom.

Perhaps in your culture dead bodies are burned in a fire. But in this culture the dead body was buried in a tomb cut out of a big rock. But before Jesus can be buried in the tomb, Joseph has to first get permission from Pilate. However, Pilate wants to make sure that Jesus really is dead so he calls in a Roman Centurion. This is the man who has witnessed Jesus dying on the cross. He has seen Jesus give up His spirit and die, and therefore confirms that Jesus is dead.

Jesus is buried (Mark 15:46-47)

Jesus is wrapped in cloth, placed in a tomb and it is sealed with a large stone. It would take many men to move such a stone. There is also a guard of between 4 – 16 soldiers placed outside the tomb to guard it, in case someone tries to steal Jesus' body. Standing by watching are two women - Mary Magdalene and another woman called Mary, the Mother of Jesus. People witnessed Jesus' death and now people are also witnessing His burial.

Jesus is risen (Mark 16:1-8)

Early on the Sunday morning the women are on their way to visit the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices. But they have a problem. Who will roll the stone away for them? It takes many men to do that. But as they arrive at the tomb they are shocked to find the stone is already rolled away. They walk into the tomb and see an angel who tells them that Jesus has risen. The angel points to the fact that Jesus is not there. We read in other books in the Bible that Jesus' grave clothes and head cloth are still in the tomb.

Evidence for the resurrection

The Bible presents us with clear evidence (based on eyewitness accounts) that Jesus died, was buried and three days later rose again. However, there are many people today who do not believe that Jesus is alive. They rather believe various theories about His resurrection:

1. Jesus' body was stolen

Answer – The tomb was empty but the grave clothes were still in it. The body of Jesus could not have been stolen since thieves would not spend time unwrapping grave clothes.

2. The followers of Jesus made up the story

Answer – The first witnesses were women, who were not respected as reliable witnesses in this culture. Now if you are going to make up a story about Jesus rising from the dead, you don't use women as your first witnesses. No one would believe your book. Yet Mark says women were the first witnesses. Why? Because that's exactly how it happened.

If the followers of Jesus were making up this story, telling people that their leader Jesus had risen from the dead, then why did the

Romans not go to the tomb of Jesus and just get His body and show the people that He was still dead?

3. Jesus' followers only imagined that they saw Him

Answer – There were many witnesses who saw Jesus alive after He rose from the dead. Jesus met them in small groups, and on one occasion in a crowd of 500 people. They could touch Him, talk with Him, and He even ate meals with them.

4. It is not logical for a human to rise from the dead

Answer – But let us not forget who Jesus is; He is God's Son. It is completely logical that God can raise Jesus from the dead. He gave life to Adam and He can give life to His Son Jesus.

The significance of Jesus' resurrection

1. Jesus is God (Mark 16:7)

The resurrection of Jesus confirms everything He said about Himself. Remember in Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34 Jesus predicted that He was going to die and rise from the dead. The angel confirms that Jesus has been telling the truth – *“Just as He told you”*. Only God keeps His promises, but so does Jesus; which means that Jesus really is God on earth.

2. God's Kingdom has come

When Jesus came He announced that God's Kingdom was here, and He demonstrated power over death by raising people from the dead. However, Jesus died himself. If He remains dead surely God's Kingdom cannot be established, for there is no Kingdom without a King. Mark starts his book by saying, *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1)*. However, if Jesus remains dead it is bad news, not good news. Satan and death win.

But the good news of the Bible is that Jesus rose from the dead. Death could not hold Him. Satan could not keep Him in the tomb. Satan brought death into God's good creation, but now Jesus defeats that great enemy on behalf of His people for whom He died. Jesus stands on Satan's head and crushes Him. The Sunday when Jesus rose to life is the day that death died! Therefore, the day Satan was finally defeated is the day God's Kingdom comes in

power. Jesus secures victory for God's Kingdom through His death and resurrection. The promise of Genesis 3:15 has been accomplished.

3. People are to repent and believe this good news (Mark 1:15, Acts 17:31)

Jesus summarised His message like this: *"The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe this good news."* Jesus has established God's Kingdom by defeating death and Satan, bringing in a new age when humans can live forever in the presence of God, like it was intended in Eden. Jesus is now the victorious King of the whole world, and God has appointed Him as judge. The Bible says that God has appointed a day of judgement to punish all the wrongs committed by every person on earth. Jesus will be the judge on this day, which is as certain as the day Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus message to us is to repent now and believe this good news.

Jesus defeats Satan through His death and resurrection, and therefore brings in God's Kingdom – the new age when God's people will live in God's presence, under His rule and blessing.



Think it through & discuss

1. What evidence is there that Jesus died and was buried?
2. What evidence is there that Jesus rose from the dead?
3. Discuss the theories about Jesus' resurrection.
4. How is Jesus' resurrection connected to His Kingdom?
5. What is the significance of Jesus' resurrection for us today?