

Kingdom Didn't Come

What Mark tells us about Jesus is totally different than what John tells us about Jesus. The two gospel authors are not on the same page at all. John is in no way a reliable source of information about the life and teachings of Jesus. The author of John's gospel thoroughly discredits himself, so there is no point dwelling on anything he had to say. So, let's see what Mark tells us about Jesus.

In Mark, Jesus' world view is apocalyptic. It was the Jewish world view, and it had been around for 150 years. The Greek word for *apocalypse* (*apokalupto*, *apokalupso*) means: *to uncover; to lay open what has been veiled or covered up; to disclose; to make bare; to make known or make manifest; to disclose what was before unknown.*

Apocalypticists believed that God had revealed to them secrets that made sense of an otherwise perplexing, enigmatic world. Jews had long struggled to understand why so many good people suffered while so many evil people thrived. Why did the righteous suffer more than the wicked, and often at the hands of the wicked? Why had their God allowed that for so long? It just didn't make sense. Until, that is, God solved the mystery for them. His apocalyptic message was that the current kingdom, ruled by the Devil and his forces (both in human and supernatural forms), would soon be swept away and replaced by a new kingdom – the kingdom of God. Then there would be no more pain, suffering, or misery. No more demons and forces of darkness. No more famine, war, earthquake, disease, hurricanes, or heartbreak of psoriasis.

Mark 1:15:

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Jews wouldn't have to wait much longer.

Mark 9:1:

And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

Mark 13:30:

Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.

In fact, the process had already begun. The new kingdom would be ushered in by the Son of Man, who would judge people on the basis of their acceptance or rejection of his teachings. Who was this Son of Man? Jesus himself, who was already among them, working miracles. Jesus cast out demons, because there would be no demons in the Kingdom of God. Jesus healed the sick, because there would be no illness or disease in the Kingdom of God. Jesus raised the dead, because there would be no death in the Kingdom of God. All this was the point of many of Jesus' parables as well as his miracles.

Meanwhile, people needed to prepare themselves for the new kingdom. They needed to turn away from evil and align themselves with the forces of good. They needed to accept the teachings of Jesus.

Mark 8:38:

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

But, of course, it wouldn't be that simple.

Mark 8:31:

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

Mark identifies Jesus as the Son of God.

Mark 1:11, 9:7, 15:39:

And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

But Jesus himself acknowledges this title only reluctantly, toward the end of his life.

Mark 14:62:

“I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

There is one small problem with Mark’s gospel. What Jesus taught the Jews was false. The kingdom, as it turns out, was not at hand. The people that were supposed to still be alive when the new kingdom arrived died disappointed. Some 2000 years later, that kingdom still has not arrived. Jesus was wrong.

That’s pretty hard for fundagelicals to explain. It’s impossible to reconcile with their version of an omniscient, immutable, infallible God. They try to perform mental gymnastics in a futile, pathetic attempt to escape the fact that Jesus was wrong. Well, they say, when Jesus said the kingdom of God was coming soon, he didn’t mean it the way we think of soon, because to God one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day. But that doesn’t even come close to getting the job done. Jesus said very explicitly that the new kingdom would arrive during the lifetime of some of the people he taught. That did not happen. Period.