

NEW TESTAMENT 1

UNIT FIVE: THE KING OF THE KINGDOM

Conflict in Galilee

(Mark 2:1-3:6)

- After Jesus' authority is revealed, it is questioned and opposed.
- The passage includes five conflict stories with the same structure:
 - Jesus performs some startling action.
 - Pharisees and scribes are offended and challenge his action.
 - Jesus responds with a crucial pronouncement which sheds light on who he is.

- **THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC**
 - Jesus tells the paralytic that his sins are forgiven.
 - Only God has authority to forgive sins.
 - By making the paralytic walk, Jesus expects the scribes to see that the hidden work of forgiveness has also been successful.
 - Jesus claims not just to announce God's forgiveness but actually to forgive.

➤ THE CALL OF LEVI

- Jesus calls a tax collector, with no rights in law, to join his followers.
- The scribes are appalled that Jesus should mix with the ungodly.
- Jesus responds by inviting sinners, not the righteous, to God's kingdom.
- The kingdom of God is not for those who consider themselves worthy but rather for those who know they are not.

➤ FASTING AND JOY

- The Pharisees fasted twice each week, but Jesus declined to do the same
- Jesus responds by saying that fasting is no longer appropriate.
- Fasting is an expression of sorrow for past sin and preparation for future salvation.
- No need for fasting as the age of salvation has come, forgiveness is here.

➤ LABOURING AND THE SABBATH

- The Pharisees objected to Jesus' disciples picking grain on the Sabbath.
- Jesus criticises the Pharisees' understanding of the law.
- The Pharisees' view would force a man to keep the Sabbath at all costs.
- The Sabbath is to provide rest for the people and remind them of the eternal rest which God has prepared for them.

➤ HEALING ON THE SABBATH

- The Pharisees are angered when Jesus performs a non-urgent healing on the Sabbath.
 - Jesus responds by asking whether it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.
 - The Pharisees can not answer, as whatever they say will condemn them.
 - Jesus again illustrates that the king in God's kingdom is Lord of the Sabbath.
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- Jesus has come into conflict with the old order.
 - He has attacked their beliefs and practices.
 - He has also revealed himself as the king in God's kingdom.

Miracles

- Nearly one third of Mark's gospel deals directly or indirectly with miracles.
- Miracles have been said to be evidence of Jesus' identity so that people may have faith.
- However, witnesses were often sworn to secrecy and faith seems to be a precondition for miracles.

- In Matthew 11, Jesus describes his work in reference to Isaiah. His preaching and miracles are the forerunners of salvation.
- In Mark 3, Jesus is accused of being demon-possessed. Jesus responds that his miracles are actually smashing Satan's power before God's kingdom is established.
- In Luke 11, Jesus says that he casts out demons by the finger of God. Similar language is used in Exodus at the time of the plagues.
- Both the plagues and the miracles point to the coming of the kingdom of God – God's salvation is breaking in.
- The miracles are an important part of Jesus' message. They show something of what it means for God to rule. They are signs of the coming of God's kingdom.

Jesus, Lord Over Chaos

(Mark 2:1-3:6)

- Four miracle stories appear in this section of Mark's Gospel.
 - Jesus calms the storm: after he does something only God can do, the disciples begin to ask who he is.
 - Jesus exorcises the demon-possessed hermit: he overthrows Satan and restores the man to wholeness.
 - Jesus raises Jairus' daughter to life: he shows that he is Lord, even of our great enemy, death.
 - Jesus heals the woman with the flow of blood: like death, sickness is a disorder in creation because of sin, but Jesus banishes sickness and fear.

Conclusion

- Jesus is Lord over chaos; he is the one who restores the form and order of Eden.
- Jesus' miracles point to the fact that God is acting to restore things to their rightful place.
- Mark wrote at a time of chaos, and stresses that contrary to appearances, God is in control.