

Mark 4:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

Analysis

Jesus introduces final parable: 'Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?' The rhetorical questions emphasize kingdom's uniqueness—difficult to capture in human analogies. The plural 'we' includes hearers in reflection. This introduces the mustard seed parable, illustrating kingdom's small beginnings and great culmination. The humble question-approach demonstrates pedagogical wisdom—engaging hearers' minds rather than imposing answers. Jesus consistently uses familiar images (seeds, soil, harvest) to illuminate heavenly realities, making divine mysteries accessible while maintaining their profundity.

Historical Context

Rabbinic teachers regularly used comparative formulas: 'The kingdom is like...' or 'What is it like? It is like...' Jesus adopts and perfects this method. The question acknowledges kingdom's transcendence—earthly comparisons illuminate but never fully capture heavenly realities. Jewish expectations anticipated visible, political messianic kingdom; Jesus redefines it through parables emphasizing hidden growth, small beginnings, and future consummation. Early church struggled to explain this to Jewish audiences expecting different kingdom manifestation. Church history wrestles with tensions between kingdom's 'already' (inaugurated) and 'not yet' (consummated) aspects.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do parables help you grasp spiritual realities that transcend direct explanation?
2. What does Jesus' question-approach teach about humble, engaging communication of truth?
3. How does understanding kingdom's mystery guard against overly simplistic or triumphalistic expectations?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ	ἔλεγεν	τίνι	ὁμοιώσωμεν	τὴν	βασιλείαν	τοῦ
And	he said	Whereunto	shall we liken	G3588	the kingdom	G3588
G2532	G3004	G5101	G3666		G932	
θεοῦ	ἥ	ἐν	ποῖα	παραβολῇ	παραβάλωμεν	αὐτήν
of God	or	with	what	comparison	shall we compare	it
G2316	G2228	G1722	G4169	G3850	G3846	G846

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