

# Mark 4:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

## Analysis

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Jesus describes transformation: 'But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.' The contrast is dramatic: smallest seed → greatest herb (garden plant). 'Great branches' provide shelter for 'fowls'—possibly alluding to Daniel 4:12, 21 where great tree represents kingdom sheltering nations. The kingdom starts small but grows to universal scope, providing refuge for all peoples. 'Lodge under shadow' suggests protection, rest, blessing. The church becomes shelter for all nations, fulfilling Abrahamic promise (Genesis 12:3) that all families would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

## Historical Context

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The image echoes Old Testament kingdom prophecies: Ezekiel 17:22-24 (tender twig → mighty cedar sheltering birds); Daniel 4:10-12 (tree reaching heaven, sheltering all). Jesus' Jewish audience would catch these allusions—kingdom starting small but becoming universal. Early church fulfilled this: Jerusalem sect → Gentile mission → global Christianity. The 'birds' represent nations finding refuge in Christ's kingdom. Church history demonstrates parable's truth: small, persecuted church grew into global faith. This growth isn't always institutional triumphalism but gospel's advance transforming lives and cultures.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding kingdom's destiny—universal scope sheltering all nations—affect your missional vision?
2. What does this teach about trusting God's timing in kingdom advance despite current smallness?
3. How can the church provide 'shade and shelter' for spiritually homeless people today?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	ὅταν	σπαρῇ	ἀναβαίνει	καὶ	γίνεται	πάντων	τῶν
<b>But</b>	<b>when</b>	<b>it is sown</b>	<b>it groweth up</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>becometh</b>	<b>all</b>	G3588
G2532	G3752	G4687	G305	G2532	G1096	G3956	
λαχάνων	μείζων	καὶ	ποιεῖ	κλάδους	μεγάλους	ὥστε	
<b>herbs</b>	<b>greater than</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>shooteth out</b>	<b>branches</b>	<b>great</b>	<b>so that</b>	
G3001	G3187	G2532	G4160	G2798	G3173	G5620	
δύνασθαι	ὑπὸ	τὴν	σκιάν	αὐτοῦ	τὰ	πετεινὰ	τοῦ
<b>may</b>	<b>under</b>	G3588	<b>the shadow</b>	<b>of it</b>	G3588	<b>the fowls</b>	G3588
G1410	G5259		G4639	G846		G4071	
οὐρανοῦ	κατασκηνοῦν						
<b>of the air</b>	<b>lodge</b>						
G3772	G2681						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 91:1** (Parallel theme): He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

**Isaiah 11:9** (Parallel theme): They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

**Isaiah 32:2** (Parallel theme): And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

**Lamentations 4:20** (Parallel theme): The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.

**Song of Solomon 2:3**: As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

**Proverbs 4:18** (Parallel theme): But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.