

**INTRODUCTION.**

- A. Scripture texts: **Mark 4:26-29; Mt. 13:31,32; 13:33.**
- B. Jesus further explains the nature of the new kingdom and the power of the gospel in parables.

**I. THE GROWING SEED.**

- A. See **Mk. 4:26-32.**

And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; **27** and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows--how, he himself does not know. **28** The soil produces crops by itself, first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. **29** But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." **30** And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? **31** *It is* like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, **32** yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that **THE BIRDS OF THE AIR** can **NEST UNDER ITS SHADE.**"

- B. This parable gave the apostles both a warning and encouragement. The encouragement was that, from very small beginnings, the kingdom would eventually grow in size and in influence. While a mustard seed is not the smallest seed in the world, it was probably the smallest seed that the Jews sowed in their gardens. It was traditional symbol of that which is tiny.
- C. But the growth of the seed is only one part of the story; we must also account for the birds in the branches!
- D. The growth of the kingdom will not result in the conversion of the world. In fact, some of the growth will give opportunity for Satan to get in and go to work! One way to say it is, "The bigger the net, the greater the possibility of catching both good and bad fish" (Mt. 13:47-50).

**II. PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED**

- A. The text (Mt. 13:31,32).

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; **32** and this is smaller than all *other* seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that **THE BIRDS OF THE AIR** come and **NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.**"

- B. This is a very simple parable and can best be explained by looking at some of the analogies:
- C. We need not make the mistake of thinking that something small cannot be something powerful and quite large with God's help.

- D. Analogies:

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|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The small seed            | the small beginning of the church.    |
| 2. The large plant           | the ultimate glory and success.       |
| 3. The birds in the branches | temptations exist but not part of.... |
| 4. The field                 | the world.                            |
| 5. The one sowing seed       | Christ or God.                        |
| 6. The seed itself           | the word of God.                      |
| 7. The mustard tree          | The visible church in all ages.       |

**III. PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.**

- A. The text (Mt. 13:33).

He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

- B. Some analogies:

- 1. The leaven is the influence of the kingdom on others.
- 2. The leaven changes the character of people influenced by it.

3. Leaven rises silently, almost unnoticed but steadily.
  4. A little leaven can change a great amount, of dough.
  5. The woman may be unimportant, if not would represent the church.
- C. One false interpretation of this parable is to think of the leaven as being a corrupting influence on the church. If that be true then the promise of Mt. 16:18 is invalid.