

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Jesus gives the *Kingdom Parables*. Jesus began to teach in parables after He was rejected by the Jewish leaders, who accused Him of being possessed by Satan. **MARK 3:22-30; 4:1,2,10-13,33,34**. In review, the Kingdom of Heaven (God) has five distinct phases:

1. **Old Testament Phase**
2. **At Hand Phase** – when Jesus walked on the earth
3. **Interim Phase** – the period after Jesus’ ascension until His 2nd Coming
4. **Millennial Phase** – Jesus’ 1,000 year reign
5. **Eternal Phase** – after the Millennium

We live in the third phase, the King has returned to Heaven. The Kingdom Parables speak of this time frame.

Q) What does Jesus tell us about the characteristics of this phase through parables?

(vv14-20) Parable of the Sower – this phase will be a time of sowing the word (evangelism). Some will receive, some are to pre-occupied to receive

(vv21-25) Parable of the Candle – an age where the light of God would be revealed through proclaiming the word. We are all encouraged and warned by Jesus to listen carefully to the Word of God.

(vv26-29) Parable of the Growing Seed – God’s word will continue to go out and permeate men, and this goes on until the final harvest.

MARK 4:30-32 PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED - Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed. Jesus is simply using the tiny mustard seed as an idiom that His Jewish listeners would truly understand. While the mustard seed normally grows to be a small bush, some do grow abnormally large, so large that birds may nest in their branches.

MATTHEW 13 – this chapter contains all the Kingdom Parables (vv1-9) the Parable of the Sower as also found in **MARK**. (vv10-17) Matthew is explaining the same thing as Mark records (vv24-30) The Parable of the Tares and Wheat which only Matthew records. This parable teaches us that in this third (interim) phase of the Kingdom, before Jesus returns, there will be growing side by side children of the Kingdom and children of the Devil. So the Kingdom includes both the genuine and the imposter. (vv31,32) right on the heels of the Tares and Wheat, Jesus gives the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

MARK 4:10-13 Jesus explained the Parable of the Sower in order that we would have a key to unlock the other parables that He was about to tell. Many teach that the Parable of the Mustard Seed shows how the kingdom starts tiny, but grows so big that it takes over the world. I do not agree with that interpretation.

Let’s use our key that Jesus gave us: *“fowls of the air”* – Jesus used this exact expression in the Parable of the Sower and then told us precisely what it meant; **MARK 4:3,4** the fowls of the air devoured the seed.

(v14) *“seed”* – represents the word of God; *“fowls of the air”* – represent Satan! Jesus told the disciples that this parable explains the others, so when He tells Parable of the Mustard Seed why now would the fowls of the air be likened to anything else? All through the Bible, fowls or birds generally have an evil connotation. **GENESIS 15:1-11; 40:16-19; REVELATION 18:1,2.**

MARK 4 (v32) “lodge” (NAS “nest”) literally means to pitch a tent. In the age we live in today, the church age, there are false and true people who profess Christ. Christendom includes the **Roman Catholic Church** who say that the sacraments are NECESSARY for salvation in their official catechism. **GALATIANS 2:15,16; 1:6-9** Paul clearly curses the Roman Church and yet they are considered to be “Christian.” **Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons** both deny that Jesus is God and insist that good works get you to Heaven, and yet many consider them “Christians.” **Unitarianism, Christian Science, Masons, and many others** are likewise considered Christian and yet do not follow the Bible’s teachings. Christendom has become a tree for *“...a dwelling place of demons, a cage for every unclean and hated bird.”* (**REVELATION 18:2**)

I believe that in the Parable of the Mustard Seed Jesus is warning us that the Kingdom of God would become so abnormally large and false that Satan himself would be a part of it. That is exactly what we are seeing today, yet many will not admit it or even take notice. Looking again for a moment at the Parable of the Tares and Wheat as found in **MATTHEW 13: 24 -30**.

Since many teachers use the Kingdom and the church as synonyms, they use this Parable to teach that we should not judge anything evil in the church; but in reality, the Kingdom and the church are NOT SYNONYMS! The church is just a part of the Kingdom, which includes the whole of God’s ruling realm and has both false and true inhabitants. **MATTHEW 18:15-18; 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13; 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18; JUDE 1-4,19-25** the church is specifically told not to allow evil into its midst. Genuine believers are told to come out of false fellowships. The Bible is not saying that unbelievers cannot be among us, what the Word tells us is if they are among us, we must give them the Gospel so that they would be born-again, converted.

MARK 4:33,34 let’s finish up with these awesome thoughts about our amazing God. *“...as they were able to hear it...when they were alone [with Jesus] He expounded all things to His disciples.”* In **JOHN 16:7-14** the Word tells us that even today Jesus has many things to tell us, but it is a process, and we will have truth revealed to us in portions. Jesus has given you the Person of God the Holy Spirit to *“guide...show...He [Holy Spirit] shall glorify Me.”* You must get alone with Jesus and fellowship with Him through the Spirit if you are truly seeking His truth and power. **LUKE 24:25-53** we will worship, have great joy; AMEN!