

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

Matthew 13:31-33, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-21

1. Relate the story of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven in 25 words or less.
2. Are these parables merely repetitions of the same truth or are there essential differences in the two?
3. In what way are these like the stone cut out without hands that becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth as in Daniel 2:34-35?
4. We are told that one parable declares the intensive and the other the extensive power of the gospel. Which one declares the “inner” or intensive power?
5. If the disciples were somewhat discouraged after hearing the parables of the Sower and the Tares because of hindrances, what would be encouraging about the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven?
6. What is it about a mustard seed that caused Jesus to speak of “faith as a grain of mustard seed”? (Mark 4:31, Luke 17:6)

7. In what way is the mustard seed like the kingdom of God (or of heaven)? (Mark 4:31-32)

8. From the parable of the Sower, who did we determine the sower, the field, and the seed to be? (Matthew 13:31)

9. What does the mustard seed become “when it is grown”? (Matthew 13:32)

10. Can you think of other instances when the growth of a mighty kingdom has been likened to that of a tree? (See Daniel 4:10-12 and Ezekiel 31:3-9)

11. What is it in the parable that indicates how large the mustard seed has really become? (Matthew 13:32, Mark 4:32, Luke 13:19)

12. If the birds of the air find food and shelter in the branches of the mustard tree, how is that like a feature of the kingdom of heaven? (Matthew 13:32, Mark 4:32, Luke 13:19)

13. What is "leaven"? (Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:21)

14. What do you think about the argument that the woman that hides the leaven in the meal is the apostate church since leaven is often something evil in the Scriptures?

15. How was leaven or yeast preserved in Oriental housekeeping?

16. Would the fact of the "three" measures of meal have any significance or is it mentioned because it is the quantity usually taken for one baking?

17. What is it about the working of leaven that represents the way the gospel diffuses itself through human society?

18. Did Jesus always teach in parables, or did he teach before and after this without parables? (Matthew 13:34)

19. What passage in the Old Testament reads: "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old"? (Matthew 13:35)

20. What is the main idea that is taught by both the Parable of the Tares and the Parable of the Leaven?