

Matthew 13:31-32 The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Introduction: This parable is also recorded by Mark and Luke. Its interpretation was given by Jesus to His disciples, Mark 4:34, but is not recorded. But the pattern set in Jesus' interpretation of the parable of the sower and of the tares sets the pattern for interpretation of all Kingdom parables. The field is the world, the birds represent satanic forces.

I. The elements of the parable, verses 31-32.

- A. The mustard of the text is a variety which is not grown for its greens, but for its seed.
 - 1. The seed is ground into powder and used as a hot peppery spice.
 - 2. When mixed with vinegar and water a spread is formed.
- B. A whole orchard might be planted in mustard, but in the parable Jesus speaks of only one seed.
- C. This seed is said to be the tiniest of all seeds.
 - 1. Jesus speaks of the tiniest of all seed planted in Palestine.
 - 2. There are tinier seeds in the world, but there were none tinier in the Holy land.
- D. Yet from this smallest of seeds grow the largest of herbs.
 - 1. The variety of mustard we grow as greens does not get large.
 - 2. But that variety in Israel grew from eight to twelve feet high.
 - 3. It was larger than all herbs and as large as a small tree.
- E. It was large enough that birds had been known to roost in a mustard tree.
(Not just lite or rest but roost.)
- F. Jesus does not elaborate, but that would pose a problem.
 - 1. The birds would eat the seed in the area of the roost.
 - 2. Many birds on one tender mustard branch would break some of the branches.
 - 3. The roosting tree would be polluted by the birds.

II. The interpretation of the parable.

- A. Christianity had a very small beginning.
 - 1. There was no nation which rallied around the King. (His own nation rejected Him.)
 - 2. No army was raised and no military campaign made.
 - 3. There were no centralized headquarters. (Not even Jerusalem.)
- B. But from this small beginning came a kingdom of great proportions.
 - 1. The Bible out sells every other book in print.
 - 2. Loyal subjects dwell in every land.
 - 3. It has more citizens than any other nation under the sun.
 - 4. Men of all ranks are in the kingdom. (Even heads of governments.)
 - 5. It has been persecuted severely, but the more it was persecuted the more it grew.
 - 6. Christianity is not the largest of the world's religions, but it is firmly established in the world.
- C. Christianity has also now become polluted.
 - 1. Satanic forces have decided that they cannot destroy it and so they have decided to join it. (They have come to roost in its branches.)
 - 2. Business men sometimes join purely for business reasons.
 - 3. Politicians join for political reasons.
 - 4. People of the community join for prestige.
 - 5. Gangsters and hoodlums join for respectability.
- D. Every kind of religious heretic and quack has joined.
 - 1. You do not have to go out into the non-Christian world to find the teaching of Satan; you

can find it right in Christianity.

2. Let me cite you to a few examples:

- a. Some Christian leaders preach that Jesus was not virgin born; they say He was the illegitimate child of a German soldier.
- b. Many deny that Jesus arose from the grave.
- c. The majority deny that salvation is by the grace of God thru faith in Jesus Christ.
- d. One whole denomination denies the existence of a real living God.
- e. One professor in a theological seminary wrote, "God is dead."
- f. Growing numbers deny the inspiration of the Bible.
- g. Also, growing numbers not only endorse homosexuality, but proclaim themselves to be homosexuals.

Conclusion:

1. What is important today is not that one should believe in Christianity, but that he should believe in Christ.
2. It is important to be genuinely saved and not just one of the many who join the church.
3. After one is saved, it is important that he commit himself to Christ. (He should be loyal to His King.)
4. Every born again believer should commit himself to an earnest study of God's word.
5. He should stand loyal to New Testament truth. (That means that he will have to stand against the flood of satanic heresies that go under the guise of Christianity.)
6. He should be a faithful member of one of the true New Testament churches. (True to God's Bible and true to the God of the Bible.)

Preached at Pleasant Hill M.B.C. 3-11-84 A.M.