

PARABLES ON GROWTH **(Matthew 13:31-33)**

I. Both are small in the beginning.

- A. A mustard seed, when planted, is very tiny, about the size of a pinhead.
- B. Only a small amount of leaven is used to make a loaf of bread.
- C. Compare this to the beginning of the Lord's church.
 - 1. In Acts 2, Jews are gathered from all over the world.
 - 2. Some have estimated there to have been over 250,000 people present.
 - 3. Of that number, 3,000 were added to the church by the Lord.
- D. Remember that the dream Daniel interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar contained a small stone cut out of a mountain.
 - 1. That small stone became a great kingdom.
 - 2. It became great enough to destroy the Roman Empire.
- E. No doubt the Lord taught a small beginning for His kingdom.

II. Both spread out.

- A. Notice that eventually that mustard seed would grow into a tree with a number of branches.
- B. The small amount of leaven that is placed in with the flour works itself throughout the mixture affecting every part of the bread.
 - 1. You never find all the leaven in one section of the bread.
 - 2. It goes throughout, creating the holes in the bread which allow air to pass through it making the bread rise.
- C. Again, this is exactly how the church grew in the first century.
 - 1. It had its beginning in Jerusalem.
 - 2. Jesus had told His disciples such would be the case.
 - 3. But then He told them that it would begin to spread (Acts 1:8).
- D. When you read through the book of Acts, you see that this is exactly the growth pattern of the Lord's church.
 - 1. Acts 8:2 tells us that Christians went throughout Judea and Samaria.
 - 2. Beginning in verse 5, we are told how the kingdom was planted and grew in Samaria.
 - 3. After this, we see how the kingdom, or church, spread to Antioch, then by the work of Paul and Barnabas it began to spread to the utmost parts of the world.
- E. It spread to such a great degree that Paul could say the gospel had been preached everywhere during his lifetime (Colossians 1:23).

III. Both require someone to place them where needed.

- A. Notice that a man took that mustard seed and placed it in the ground.
 - 1. An earlier parable, of the sower, teaches that not all soils are capable of allowing a seed to grow.
 - 2. This man took care where he placed this mustard seed.
 - 3. It didn't happen there by itself.
- B. Also, a woman took the leaven and placed it in the bread.
- C. Looking at the growth of the kingdom, we see it took someone or a group

of people to spread the message of the kingdom.

1. Initially, it was the apostles.
 2. Then we see other Christians going out and teaching (Acts 8:4, 5; Paul and Barnabas; Paul and Silas).
- D. If the kingdom was to grow, it had to be taken out of Jerusalem into other places.

IV. Both grow silently.

- A. You don't hear a tree growing do you?
- B. The leaven working in the meal is not loud is it?
- C. The kingdom grew the same way.
1. Those men and women opened their mouths of course.
 2. However, they did not draw attention to themselves.
 3. They were not flashy in the way they did things.
- D. Christian men and women simply taught the gospel when the opportunity presented itself.
- E. Paul commanded that we pray for those in government so that we can lead "a quiet and peaceable life" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
1. Those brethren did not go around drawing attention to themselves.
 2. Rather, they let their good works show the light of the Father that men could bring Him glory and honor.

V. Both are secure where they are.

- A. A tree not only grows upward, it also grows downward, into the ground spreading roots to secure it into the ground.
- B. The leaven works itself through the flour as it bakes, attaching itself to every part of the loaf of bread, causing it to be inseparable from that loaf.
- C. The kingdom built by the Lord is secure.
1. Daniel said that it would stand forever.
 2. David would told there would always be a king on His throne.
 3. Jesus said that even death could not destroy this kingdom.
- D. Men tried to destroy it at its inception.
1. You see how the apostles were persecuted.
 2. You soon see Satan attacking it from within through Ananias and Sapphira.
 3. You see one of its citizens stoned to death, which was followed by a persecution of its members.
 4. In every city into which Paul went, the kingdom faced obstacles.
- E. Through the ages, men have attacked this kingdom.
- F. It still stands, and will do so till Jesus delivers it up to the Father.

VI. Both provide support.

- A. The parable of mustard seed tells us that the tree grew enough that birds could nest there.
- B. The leaven allowed the bread to be made that supported the family of the woman who placed it in the meal.
- C. The kingdom provides support for those who are a part of it.
1. We support one another.
 2. The Godhead supports us.

3. The seed of the kingdom, the word, provides support for Christians.