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The Parables of Jesus Christ: The Mighty Mustard Seed

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

FIFTEEN: The Mighty Mustard Seed (Mt. 13:31-32; Mk. 4:30-32; Lk. 13:18-19)

SURVEY

Although the mustard seed is one of the smallest of all seeds, it later becomes the largest of garden plants and grows into a tree, where birds can come and find shelter in its branches.

SIGNIFICANCE

This parable, as no other, stresses the insignificant beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven (in the Upper Room with only a hundred and twenty [Acts 2]) to a worldwide entity. See Col. 1:6.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- The mustard seed was indeed the smallest of all seeds sown in the field. It took 750 seeds to weigh a gram. As there are twenty-eight grams in one ounce, and sixteen ounces in a pound, it would take 336,000 of these seeds to equal a pound. And yet this tiny seed can, in a very few weeks, grow into a mustard plant fifteen feet high.

Jesus compares all of this with the Kingdom of God.

1. Christ's first coming and the kingdom—At that time, it was but a tiny seed. The Roman rulers had ridiculed it, and the Jewish leaders had rejected it. In fact, the last question asked of Christ by His disciples just prior to His ascension had to do with the kingdom.
"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)
2. Christ's second coming and the kingdom: At that time, it will become as the mighty mustard plant.
"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11:15)

- The tree here can be compared with the one described in Daniel 4.

1. As compared: Both trees grew rapidly to a great height, providing refuge for the birds of the air.
2. As contrasted: The tree in Daniel 4 represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. The tree in Matthew 13 speaks of Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Daniel 4 tree was soon cut down. Nebuchadnezzar would be punished with insanity and his kingdom later be given over to the Persians (Daniel 5).
3. The Matthew 13 tree will never fall, but will eventually give way to Jesus' 1000-year reign over all the earth!