

Luke 13:18-21

Introduction: This probably takes place in December of 32, just prior to Jesus' arrival at the Feast of Dedication on December 18 in Jerusalem, which is described in John 10:22-39. Jesus has just demonstrated, through the healing of the disabled woman, the character of the kingdom and how the kingdom will be established (i.e. God's power and mercy). This becomes His teaching theme from 13:18-14:35.

Jesus's first word picture—13:18-19 ¹⁸ *Then He was saying,*

- 1) Jesus invites His listeners to think carefully—13:18
 - a) *“What is the kingdom of God (i.e. the Messianic Kingdom; Revelation 20:4-6) like?”*
 - b) *And to what should I compare it?*
- 2) Jesus addresses **three** aspects of the kingdom
 - a) It will have a seemingly insignificant beginning—¹⁹ *It is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden;*
 - i) Why not an impressive cedar tree?
 - ii) Jesus' earthly ministry does not look all that impressive right now. In fact it looks weak and impotent at times.
 - b) It will someday be significant—*and it grew and became a large tree,*
 - i) Someday the kingdom will be spread far and wide.
 - c) It will be a place of merciful shelter—*and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”* (cf. Daniel 4:7-23)
 - i) Cf. Psalm 2, Daniel 2:44
- 3) A familiar OT passage that parallels this thought is Ezekiel 17:22-24, referring to the house of David.
- 4) It is inevitable that the kingdom of God will be established on earth.

Jesus's second word picture—13:20-21 ²⁰ *And again He said,*

- 1) Jesus again invites His listeners to think carefully—13:20
 - a) *“To what should I compare the kingdom of God?”*
- 2) Jesus addresses **two** aspects of the kingdom
 - a) It will have a comparatively insignificant beginning—²¹ *It is like yeast that a woman took and hid in nearly 50 pounds of wheat flour*
 - i) Yeast is not regarded as evil or wicked in this context.
 - ii) It has a hidden transforming power or potency. (Constable)
 - b) It will eventually permeate everything—*until it was all leavened.”*
 - i) Dough has no power to change itself; change must come from something outside itself. Yeast must work from the inside out; it cannot change the dough while it is outside. (Constable)
- 3) Don't be deceived by its seemingly small start. (NET)
- 4) Jesus' enemies are currently in places of power and influence. Doesn't this prove the inability of God? No! Relatively obscurity does not mean defeat.
- 5) It is inevitable that the kingdom of God will be established on earth.

Other thoughts on the kingdom of God

- 1) In both parables there is a delay between the kingdom's inception and its full realization. (Jeremiah)
- 2) Do not separate the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. While not exactly synonymous, they are clearly interchangeable in certain contexts.
- 3) While Christianity is primarily **Gentile** in nature, the kingdom of God/Heaven is primarily **Jewish**.
- 4) Do not confuse the church and the kingdom. We do not believe in Christendom, which combines and confuses the kingdom with Christianity.
- 5) Do not confuse the eternal kingdom and the Messianic/Millennial kingdoms. The Millennial kingdom is the visual, earthly expression of God's eternal rule.
- 6) The Messianic kingdom of which Christ speaks in the Gospels is not currently in effect.
 - a) Currently Jesus sits on His Father's throne, not on the throne of David.
- 7) We must trust in God's wisdom and ability to establish the kingdom at just the right time and in just the right way to achieve maximum glory for Himself.

Take-home truth: it is inevitable that the kingdom of God will be established on earth. Ask for grace to wait patiently for its establishment.