

Questions for Gospel Harmony #52

Matthew 13.31-35; Mark 4.30-34

1. Are these parables illustrative (do they illustrate a principle) or allegorical (do the various parts represent different things)? If illustrative, what principle do they illustrate? If allegorical, what do their various parts symbolize? (Matthew 13.31-35; Mark 4.30-34)

Special Question: Some believe that the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Hidden Leaven describe corrupted or apostate Christianity. Why have some Bible readers reached this conclusion? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this interpretation?

Special Question: Some believe that these parables teach about the spread of the gospel. If this is true, what do these parables tell us about how the gospel spreads?

Special Question: Critics of the Bible point out that the mustard seed is not, in fact, the smallest seed “in all the earth” as proof against the inerrancy of Scripture. How should we respond to this criticism?

Matthew 13.31-32; Mark 4.21-25

Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes a tree and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest in its branches under its shade." Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."