

I. The Parable of the Mustard Seed

1. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a mustard seed ([Mt. 13:31-32](#); pp. [Mk. 4:30-32](#); [Lk. 13:18-19](#)).
 - a. “**MUSTARD**—a plant of the genus sinapis, a pod-bearing, shrub-like plant, growing wild, and also cultivated in gardens. The little round seeds were an emblem of any small insignificant object. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament; and in each of the three instances of its occurrence in the New Testament ([Matt. 13:31](#), [32](#); [Mark 4:31](#), [32](#); [Luke 13:18](#), [19](#)) it is spoken of only with reference to the smallness of its seed. The common mustard of Palestine is the Sinapis nigra. This garden herb sometimes grows to a considerable height, so as to be spoken of as ‘a tree’ as compared with garden herbs” (Easton, M. G. Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature, Harper & Brothers, 1893, pp. 482–83).
 - b. “Among the rabbis a ‘grain of mustard’ was a common expression for anything very minute, which explains Our Lord’s phrase, ‘faith as a grain of mustard seed’ ([Mt 17:20](#); [Lk 17:6](#))” (Masterman, E. W. G. “Mustard.” The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, edited by James Orr et al., vol. 1–5, The Howard-Severance Company, 1915, pp. 2101–02).

II. The Explanation

1. The kingdom of heaven was prophesied to start small and to grow large ([Dan. 2:34-35](#), [44-45](#); [Isa. 2:1-4](#)).
 - a. A stone is comparatively smaller than a great mountain like a mustard seed is to the adult plant ([Dan. 2:34-35](#)).
 - b. A stone (the beginning of the kingdom of God) is comparatively smaller than a great mountain (the growth of the kingdom of God) like a mustard seed is to the adult plant ([Dan. 2:44-45](#)).
 - c. Isaiah prophesied that “**all nations** shall flow unto it” ([Isa. 2:2](#) emphasis mine) and that “**many people** shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD” ([Isa. 2:3](#) emphasis mine).
 - d. Isaiah also prophesied that it would start in Jerusalem: “For out of **Zion** shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from **Jerusalem**” ([Isa. 2:3](#) emphasis mine).

- e. Consider what Jesus did as one man and the growth of His influence today.
2. The kingdom of heaven is a reference to the church ([Mt. 16:18-19](#)).
3. The church began on the first Pentecost following the death, burial, resurrection, appearances, and ascension of Jesus ([Ac. 1:1-9](#); [Ac. 2](#)).
 - a. The seed of the kingdom was taught ([Ac. 2:14-36](#)).
 - b. About three thousand people there obeyed the gospel ([Ac. 2:37-41](#)).
 - c. Those three thousand were added to the church by God ([Ac. 2:47](#)).
4. The church rapidly expanded from Pentecost forward as the seed of the kingdom was sown.
 - a. About five thousand ([Ac. 4:4](#)).
 - b. Multitudes ([Ac. 5:14](#)).
 - c. Number of the disciples was multiplied ([Ac. 6:1](#)).
 - d. Number of the disciples multiplied **greatly** and a **great** company of the priests obeyed ([Ac. 6:7](#)).

III. The Application

1. The seed of the kingdom must be sown ([Mt. 13:31](#)).
 - a. sowed (*speiro* G4687 verb) “to scatter seed over tilled ground” (Louw-Nida 515).
 - b. The English word “sow” means “to plant seed for growth especially by scattering” (Merriam-Webster, Inc. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary., Eleventh ed., Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).
 - c. The seed is the word of the kingdom ([Mt. 13:19](#)).
 - d. The seed was sown in the First Century everywhere by preaching ([Col. 1:23](#)).
 - e. Like seed produces like plant ([Gen. 1:11-12](#)).
2. The size of the seed may seem insignificant but the results are anything but ([Mt. 13:32](#)).
 - a. God’s Word will not return to Him void ([Isa. 55:10-11](#)).
 - b. Do not despise small things ([Zec. 4:10](#)).
 - c. God’s Word is straightforward and simple and this causes some to stumble ([1 Cor. 1:26-29](#)).