

MATTHEW 13 vs 31

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³¹ Another parable He put forth to them.

Archbishop Trench, whose words studies became the foundation for the massive **Oxford Dictionary**, he writes: The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven... might seem merely repetitions... of the same truth. But upon nearer inspection essential differences reveal themselves.

Indeed, they have this much in common... that they both describe the small and slight beginnings, the gradual process, and the final, marvelous increase. **The Leaven**... has to do with the kingdom of God which comes... not with observation; **the Mustard Seed**... with that same kingdom... as it displays itself openly, and cannot be hid. One declares the **intensive**; the other, the **extensive** development of the kingdom.



John Chrysostom in Antioch... in the late 300s, he traces the connection of these two parables with those that just went before: from that of **The Sower**, the disciples may have gathered that from the Seed sown, 3-parts would perish, and only a 4th-part prosper... while that of The Tares... had opened up to them the prospect of further hindrances... which would affect even that portion which had taken root downward and sprung upward.

And so now, lest they be tempted and lose heart and despair... these two parables are spoken for their encouragement. My Kingdom, the Lord would say, will survive these losses; and surmount these hindrances; until... small as its first beginnings may appear... it will, like a mighty Tree fill the earth with its branches; and like potent leaven... diffuse its influence throughout all the world.

Jesus spoke in parables: heavenly truths contained in familiar earthly settings, and He said...

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field.

And again, Archbishop Trench writes: Mustard has a pleasant, though strong aromatic taste. If taken in any quantity, it produces a similar irritability of the nose and eyes.

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

³² **which indeed is the smaller of all seeds** / comparatively speaking... now, Jesus wasn't giving them a Botany-101 lesson. He was teaching them a parable. So, don't panic if you come across a smaller seed. Definitely, it is smaller than apple... and orange... and watermelon... and peach... and avocado seeds.

Jesus says...

but when it is grown, it is the greatest among shrubs, and becomes a tree, so the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it.

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And one last comment: the mustard seed, minute and trivial as it might seem... actually ranked among the nobler ancient symbols. According to Eastern tradition... when Darius sent Alexander the great... a barrel of sesame seed... to acquaint him with the multitude of his soldiers; Alexander sent a bag of mustard seed in return... to indicate the active, fiery biting courage of his! And like Pliny said... to bring tears to the challenger's eyes.

And Jesus... knowing all this said...

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed / it's starts out small, but when it's grown, all the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.

So that has to be a huge Tree! Don't you think? And it's a mustard tree, so it's probably going to bring a few tears to His enemies' eyes. Makes you proud of God, don't it?!

And...

³³ **Another parable He spoke to them; The kingdom of heaven is like leaven / it is like yeast;** which speaks to the sphere of God's powerful influence... actively working in the lives of His people,

which a woman took, and hid in three measures of flour,

And you know, bread making is a daily activity in every town. It still is; homemade bread... a common sight on every street, in every community... throughout the world. And into the dough being kneaded, a bit of **sour dough** is set aside from the previous mixing. This soured dough, this leavening agent is worked in to make leaven bread. The leaven is used **to make the bread rise**; and it's preserved for that purpose. And that's not a bad thing.

Jesus speaks of **the leaven of the Pharisees** -- their hypocritical doctrines and preferred traditions of men.

Jesus speaks of **the leaven of Herod** -- Dr. Gene Scott said, there isn't a politician not owned by somebody, willing to embezzle and hoard all God's gifts, while denying His presence.

The apostle Paul spoke of **the leaven of malice**... and hoping others bad; And why say all that? because **that leaven will fail**. None of that leaven is needed in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said...

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took.

And who is this woman? Well, she sounds much like the virtuous woman we read about in Proverbs 31; **but in Isaiah, chapter 66... the prophet identifies this very busy One**... when the LORD declares: **As one whom his mother comforts... so I will comfort you!**

Jesus says...

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The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures / a very caring, comforting woman; / Notice: this active yeast, this rising agent... was hid;

hid in three... measures of flour.

So...what is that leaven... in God's kingdom... hid in those three measures?

It is the love of God... hid in His only-beloved and faithful Son -- full of grace, and full of truth:

[1] foretold in the old times; [2] declared in the new; and [3] fulfilled in the world to come...

till the whole was leavened.

And that's not bad news... either! So, don't worry about the leaven of this world.

³⁴ **All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude, in parables; and without a parable He spoke nothing to them:**

³⁵ **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Psalm 78:2.**