

MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN # 3

"THE MUSTARD SEED"

I. AN ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLE (Matt. 13:31,32)

- A. The sower in this parable is no doubt Christ.
- B. The field once again is no doubt referring to the world (Matt. 13:38).
- C. The mustard seed here has to be the Kingdom of Heaven or the whole sphere of professing Christendom. The liberals interpret the mustard seed to be the gospel, the plant as the Church, and the birds as all the different people gathered into the church. This is not tenable for several reasons:
 - 1. First we see the things in this parable are all symbolic of earthly and Satanic corruption rather than spiritual Blessing.
 - 2. Secondly we see the context of all these parables are teaching how the seed-sowing program will be corrupted during this present age.
- D. The birds represent those who will be antagonistic to the seed-sowing program from within Christendom.

II. WHAT WE CAN ANTICIPATE DURING THE COURSE OF THIS PRESENT AGE.

- A. We can anticipate Christianity as a whole to be characterized by an enormous but unnatural growth. The sphere of Christian profession will grow to great proportions like a mustard seed which should have become a shrub but became a tree instead. The tree no doubt is symbolical of an earthly Kingdom as we have pictured in Nebuchadnezzar's vision (Dan. 4:21,22). The greatness of this Kingdom will be worldly and it will be condemned like the church of Pergamos, whose name means "Married," and who held to the doctrine of Balaam. (Rev. 2:14). Balaam wasn't successful in cursing Israel, but he enticed the men of Israel to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab. This is what will be characteristic of the church in our day. We can expect it to commit spiritual fornication and to be "of the world" instead of "in it".

B. We can expect Christianity in its enlarged proportions to become inwardly corrupt. The birds which devoured the seed in the first parable represented opposition from without, but here we see the opposition will come from within the ranks of Christian profession. This means we can expect Christianity as a whole to be corrupted by liberals and modernists who will be nested in it, but they will really be against the seed-sowing program. Notice how this is so descriptive of our day:

1. Organized religion in our day has become a nesting place for those who deny every major doctrine of the Word of God—even the Lord Jesus Himself.
2. Most schools and seminaries have long departed from the fundamentals of the faith and are Amillennial. There is, for example, not one single school in all the S.B.C. which holds to the pre-millennial return of Christ.
3. Christianity today has become worldly and socially accepted and those who contend for the fundamentals of the faith or carry out the seed-sowing or soul-winning programs are mocked and made fun of.

B. We who are saved can anticipate the Lord's coming to take us out of this corruption (I Thess. 4:13-18), but organized Christianity will continue in its worldly corruption and be gathered under one head and become a one-world church. Then this great tree of Christendom, with all its worldliness and corruption, will be cut down by our Lord when He comes at the Second Coming at the end of the tribulation period. Compare Rev. 13:11-17; 18:2-8; 17:15-17).

III. SOME APPLICATIONS WE CAN MAKE FROM THIS PARABLE

A. First of all, we should not be confounded by those who contend that the reference to the mustard seed as the smallest seed proves an error in the Scriptures. The word here is a comparative and not a superlative and should be translated "lesser" not the "least". It should be understood also that the Lord Jesus

was speaking of seeds native to that particular area.

- B. A second application for us is to keep on contending for the fundamentals of the Faith and keep on with the seed-sowing program despite those who have departed from them.
- C. Thirdly we should maintain a Scriptural separation individually and as a church from people and programs within Christendom which tend to make Christianity more acceptable to the world but which really involves spiritual fornication with the world.