

## Lesson D1: Mustard Seed, Yeast, and Great Treasure

Matthew 13:31-35, 44-46, 51-52

### I. THE MUSTARD SEED AND YEAST (31-35)

#### A. Two Different Interpretations

1. The Optimistic Interpretation—*The spread of Christ's kingdom throughout the world over time*
  - a. Small beginnings and quiet growth
  - b. Gospel message transforming culture
  - c. Fits with pictures in OT prophecy (Dan 2:34-35, 44; Zec 4:10)
2. The Pessimistic Interpretation—*The bureaucratic growth and spread of corruption throughout the nominal, visible Church over time*
  - a. Unnatural growth is pictured—mutation of the mustard plant into a tree
  - b. Birds were just used to symbolize the devil (13:4, 19; Dan 4:11-12, 20-21)—picture of Satan's agents at home in the bureaucratic Church and supported by it
  - c. Yeast almost always represents evil (Mat 16:12; 1 Cor 5:6-7; Gal 5:9)
  - d. Structural placement of these parables—reasonable progression of thought regarding the work of the devil to oppose the purity and effectiveness of the gospel
  - e. Explains what we see today—a Secular Church that uses the language of faith to preach a different gospel

#### B. Comparing the Interpretations

1. Disagreement: Whether or not the Kingdom of God will be completely victorious *in this Age*.
2. Agreement: Both acknowledge a *process of growth over time*.

- C. Simultaneous Realities—Both the advance of the True Church and corruption of the Visible Church are going on simultaneously.

II. **THE TREASURE PARABLES** (44-46)—Hidden Treasure in a Field and the Perfect Pearl

A. **The Discovery**—different scenarios

1. **Unexpected Discovery** (Isa 65:1)—fortunate “accident,” stumbles upon something wonderful—hidden treasure in a field
2. **Determined Search** (Jer 29:13-14; Mat 7:7-8)—the end of a focused quest for the Pearl of Great Price

B. **The Response**—the same for both men

1. **Is Personal**—I want this for *myself!* I *must have* it! I will do *whatever I have to do* to acquire it for myself!
2. **Involves the Whole Person**
  - a. **Recognizing the Treasure (engages the *mind*)**—understanding its worth
  - b. **Desiring the Treasure (captures the *heart*)**—irresistibly drawn to it
  - c. **Resolving to Have It (involves the *will*)**—forceful determination
  - d. **Making the Purchase (requires *action*)**—follows through, does not rest until the transaction is complete
3. **Is Evidence of Grace** (Mat 11:25-27; 2 Cor 4:4, 6)—*This parable is **not** teaching that we need to earn or pay for our own salvation!*

III. **Do You Understand These Things?** (51-52)

A. Jesus wants you to **understand your faith**. Real faith engages the mind.

B. Jesus expects a **personal response** from you.

1. Salvation is a personal matter.
2. The kingdom of God grows *one soul at a time*.