

April 28, 2024 – Pastor Kevin Olivier  
**Luke 13:18-21** – “Parables of Kingdom Growth”

- A. Many Christians today are pessimistic toward their hope for the church because of the writings of dispensational writers like Hal Lindsey.
- B. Since today’s message is about the coming of the kingdom of God, look back to **Lu 11:20-22**.

Let Scripture give you optimism concerning the kingdom of God.	I. REJOICE IN THE TWO PARABLES OF KINGDOM GROWTH II. FLEE THE DESTRUCTIVE DISPENSATIONAL ERROR
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I. **REJOICE IN THE TWO PARABLES OF KINGDOM GROWTH**

- A. The parable of the mustard seed tells us of the kingdom’s small beginning yet grand end. → **vv18-19**
  - 1. The mustard seed is smaller than most beans. It is smaller than many fruit seeds, yet when planted it produces a substantial tree. The largest varieties can get up to 30 feet tall!
  - 2. Besides the seed it produces as a beloved spice, the tree has the benefit of being a home for birds to make their nests within its branches (**v19**).
    - a. The birds represent a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue (**Rev. 7:9**).
    - b. Just as birds find a home in a mustard tree, those of us who are Christians have found a home in the church of Christ.
  - 3. This parable is reminiscent of Ezekiel’s prophecy. → **Ezek 17:22-24**
    - a. After God’s judgment which included their captivity in Babylon, He promised to give this grand restoration to His people.
    - b. The blessing of this prophecy is fulfilled in Christ who Isaiah describes as growing up before the Lord **“like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground”** (**Isa 53:2**).
- B. The parable of the dough tells us of the kingdom’s thorough spread. → **vv20-21**
  - 1. Some theologians have given rather fanciful interpretations as to what each of the three pecks of flour is supposed to mean.
    - a. The **“peck”** is also called a “sata.” Some sources say that a peck is equivalent to 13 liters! This batch of dough would have been for a bakery rather than for a family household.
    - b. If given enough time and the right conditions, a tablespoon of yeast could work its way through all this dough causing it to rise as the living yeast causes the process of fermentation. The Latin “Fermentare” means “to leaven.”
  - 2. Earlier in **Lu 12:1**, Jesus warned His disciples to **“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”** That mention of leaven was negative, yet here in **Lu 13:21**, leaven is used positively.
- C. Both of these parables foretold an outworking of God’s promise in **Habakkuk 2:14**: **“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”**
  - 1. Jesus began His ministry with 12 apostles in the promised land. Now the Christian faith has spread throughout the world.
    - a. The leavening work of the kingdom is not yet complete.
    - b. There are still peoples who have not yet been reached.
  - 2. We should pray, work, and give to the spread of the kingdom of Christ to bring in the fullness of the gentiles. After that has come to pass, blindness will be removed from God’s old covenant people. Then the natural and wild branches of the olive tree, God’s Kingdom, will be as one.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See **Rom 11:17-27**.

## II. FLEE THE DESTRUCTIVE DISPENSATIONAL ERRORS

A. The overarching problem with dispensationalism is that it views God's dealings with mankind in seven dispensations.

1. The word "dispensation" means management or economy. It refers to the different ways God deals with mankind in history.
2. In WCF 7, section 6, when comparing the ordinances of the NT with that of the OT, we are told, "There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations."
  - a. When offered in faith, God accepted animal sacrifices for a time as they foresignified Christ to come.
  - b. God no longer accepts animal sacrifices after Jesus, the eternal Son of God and Lamb of God, offered Himself as the ultimate and final sacrifice for sin.
  - c. Dispensationalism's seven ages or dispensations goes way beyond these distinctions, leading to error.

B. Dispensationalism teaches that we are currently in the "church age" or dispensation of grace which will come to an end. The next age is the Millennial kingdom or the Millennial Reign of Christ.

1. According to one pro-dispensational website, "Dispensationalists believe that, just as God is in this age focusing His attention on the Church, He will again in the future focus His attention on Israel."<sup>2</sup>
  - a. There is no clear case from God's Holy Word to make this false claim. Instead, Scripture teaches that the church continues until the return of Christ.
  - b. Upon Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said upon the rock of that confession, He would build His church "**and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it**" (Mat 16:16-18).
    - 1) Hell, the kingdom of Satan, is the one with gates set up in defense against the conquest of Christ and His body, the church!
    - 2) Christ on the cross defeated Satan, yet as the body of Christ, we will finish what He started as we are enabled by His Word and Holy Spirit. That is why Paul wrote in Rom 16:20, "**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**"
  - c. The church is not some bump in the road of redemptive history. The church will continue even unto glory as the beloved bride of Christ wherein we shall enjoy the blessed marriage feast of the Lamb.
2. Dispensationalism seems to ignore some passages of Scripture that breakdown the spiritual distinction between the church and Israel.
  - a. Gal 3:7 "**Those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.**"
  - b. → Rom 2:28-29
  - c. As groups of people, this distinction remains because of Paul's later prophecy concerning blindness being removed from the unbelieving Hebrew people who still refuse to see Jesus as the Messiah and Savior to cleanse them from their sin.

Review, further application, and conclusion:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/dispensationalism.html>