

“To what shall we liken the kingdom of God?
Or with what parable shall we picture it?” (Mark 4:30).

- “The kingdom of heaven is like a **mustard seed**, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree (“shoots out large branches”—Mark 4:32), so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches” (Matthew 13:31–32).

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

- Similar language found in this Messianic prophecy:
Ezekiel 17:22–24
 - “For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground...” (Isa. 53:2).
 - “Behold, the Man whose name is the **BRANCH!** From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD” (Zech. 6:12; see also Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5).
- The kingdom of heaven would begin in a very small way and grow into something exceedingly great.

And boy did it ever grow!

- Even within the 30 years recorded in the Book of Acts, beginning with that first gospel sermon in Acts 2.
- Acts 1:8; 8:4
- Everywhere they went they preached the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).
- Result: Colossians 1:13–14



Check out these “growth” references

- Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 13:48–49; 19:18–20.

It grew despite...

- The lack of worldly credentials possessed by those who preached the message.
 - “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled” (Acts 4:13).

It grew despite...

- The lack of “cooperative” efforts by local churches.
 - Local churches functioning independently of each other, without any “outside” supervision—it’s hard for most folks to imagine that in today’s religious world, but that’s exactly what we find in the New Testament.

It grew despite...

- A message many regarded as foolishness.
 - “But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a **stumbling block** and to the Greeks **foolishness**” (1 Cor. 1:23).
 - “What does this **babbler** want to say?” (Acts 17:18).
 - “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some **mocked...**” (Acts 17:32).

It grew despite...

- Persecution from without.
 - The devil sure saw this kingdom as a threat.
 - Hebrews 10:32–34.
 - Think Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, and how it turned out for the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 1:12–14).
 - And this statement he made during his second imprisonment: 2 Timothy 2:8–9.

It grew despite...

- Problems from within.
 - Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), widows neglected (Acts 6); circumcision/law of Moses (Acts 15); other false teachings described in the epistles; etc.

And it continues to grow...

- Jamaica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Dominica, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, India, Belgium, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Chad, Uganda, Slovakia, Italy, Canada, Aruba, the Philippines, Australia, Germany, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Switzerland, China, Fiji, Chili, Argentina, Venezuela, Columbia, Peru, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, and many other places.