

## False expectations are a great challenge to faith.

- Much of God's work is dramatic in the Bible.
- Should we not expect the same? (conversion, deliverance, church growth, answer to prayer)

**This was a challenge for the early church as well.**

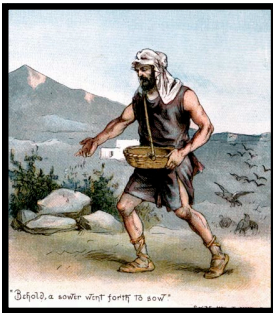
## 1. How are we to explain the lack of response to the Gospel by the Jewish leaders?

- If Jesus was the Messiah all Israel should have recognized him.
- The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus.
- Only a small remnant would believe.

**The lack of fruit is best attributed to the nature of the soil not the seed or the sower.**

Mark 4:1-20

**The Parable of the soils**



- ✓ **Alongside the road**  
(it is timed out)
- ✓ **On the rocky places**  
(it is bought out)
- ✓ **Among the thorns**  
(it is crowded out)
- ✓ **On the good soil**  
(it is patient, persevering, a priority, & fruitful)

## 2. How are we to explain the lack of dramatic change for Israel with Jesus' coming?

- The O.T. prophets taught that Messiah's coming was to bring back Israel's glory.
- Nothing seemed to have changed for the nation Israel.

### Parable of the Mustard Seed

"<sup>26</sup> And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; <sup>27</sup> and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows - how, he himself does not know. <sup>28</sup> The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. <sup>29</sup> But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

**What is the sower's responsibility?**

**To sow at the start and reap at the end.**

**What is the soil's responsibility?**

**To sprout, grow to maturity, & bear fruit over time.**

**What is the point for us?**

**Be patient, the kingdom is a process over time.**

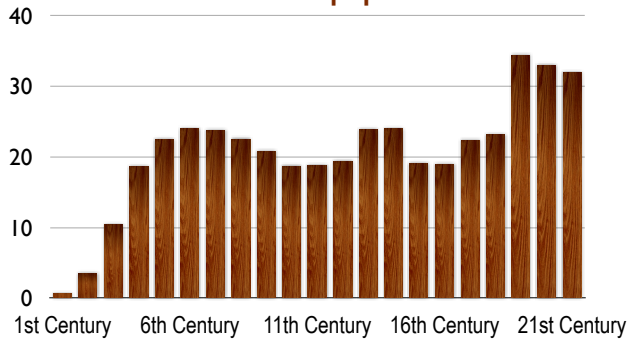
### Parable of the Mustard Seed

"<sup>30</sup> And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, <sup>32</sup> yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR can NEST UNDER ITS SHADE."

**What is the point for us?**

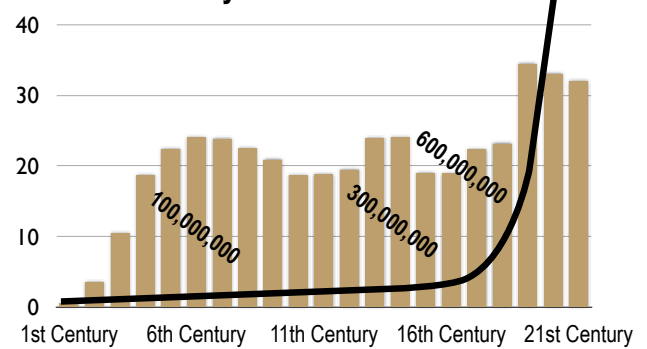
1. A very small beginning produces a large result.
2. The kingdom will be so large that it will bless many.
3. As in the first parable - this will take time requiring both faith and patience.

### Growth of Christianity by Century as a % of world population



Source: World Christian Encyclopedia

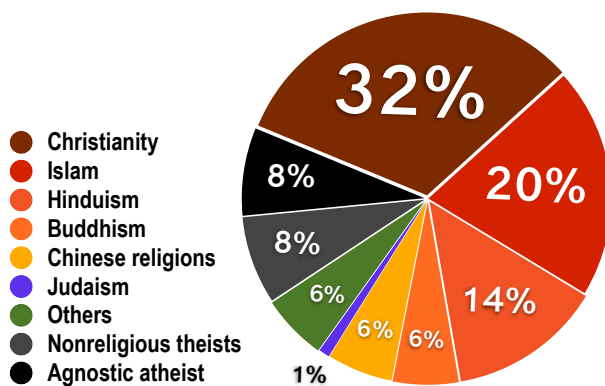
### Numerical Growth of Christianity over time



Source: World Christian Encyclopedia

### World religious beliefs

2005 Statistics  
adherents.com



### The parable as a veil

<sup>33</sup> With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; <sup>34</sup> and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples."

**Seeing and hearing from  
the right frame of reference.**

Matthew 6

<sup>22</sup> The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

### Four challenges to an "ear to hear"

1.  
This life?  
Long horizon  
perspective.

2.  
This body?  
"Inner man" over  
"outer man."

3.  
Me?  
Kingdom centered  
over ME centered.

4.  
Dramatic?  
God's timing over  
MY timing.



### Romans 8

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.** <sup>24</sup> For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

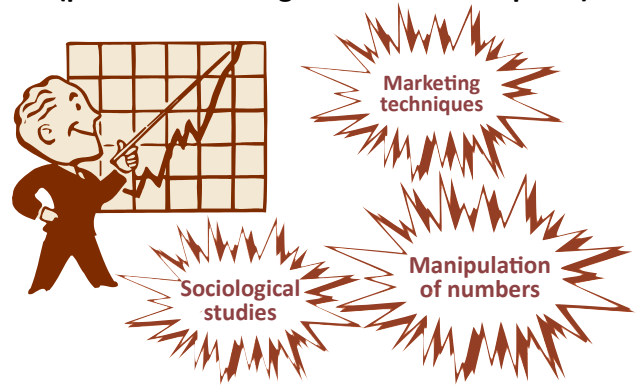
1 Corinthians 15:50

"Now I say this, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.**"

**Example  
of Jesus being IN but not OF  
the world.**

**Be prepared to work with  
God's ways and timetable  
not yours.**

**Ministry Growth**  
(personal challenge or fruit of the Spirit?)



**Personal Change**  
(more effort or more trust?)



**“Are you after My job?”**

God



1. Don't take too much responsibility for God's work.  
**Repent of playing God.**
2. Be faithful for your part.  
**Repent of your irresponsibility.**
3. Be patient in ministry and in your own life.  
**Repent of impatience and a lack of gratitude.**