

## 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)

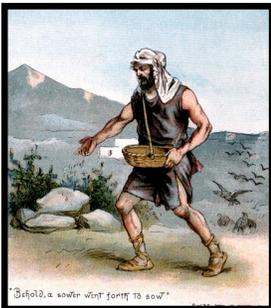
**This was a challenge for the early church as well.**

## 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?

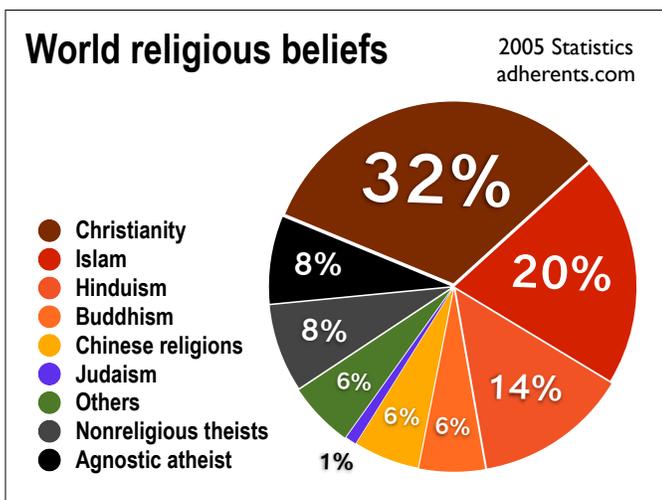
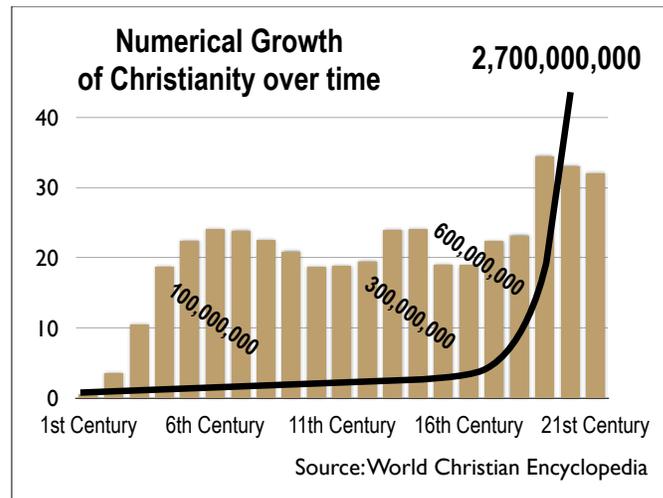
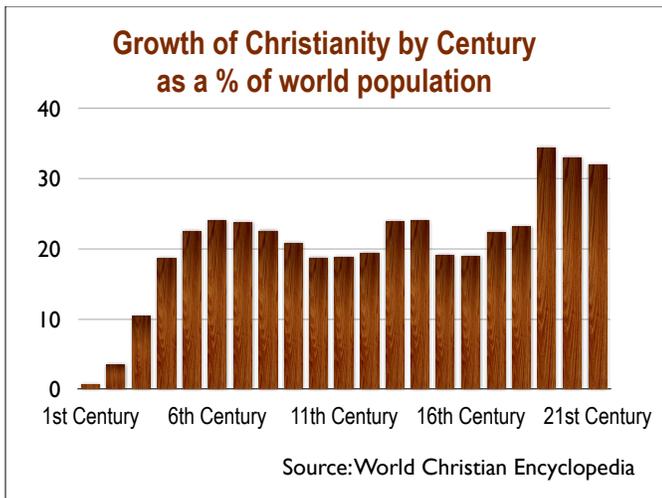
Be patient, the kingdom is a process over time.

### 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.



#### 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.”

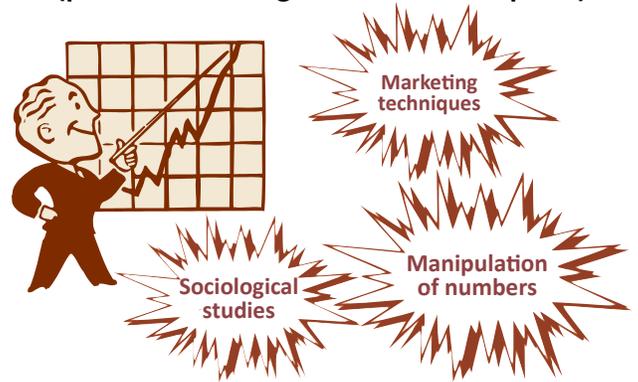
**1 Corinthians 15:50**

“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.**