

## II. The Parables of the Kingdom of God

- Several parables begin with “The kingdom of heaven/God is like ...” (Mt 13). These parables illustrate the amazing power of the KG to grow and its incredible value to grasp and are intended to encourage the audience to accept the KG.
  - Growing seed (Mk 4:26-29)
  - Mustard seed (Mk 4:30-32; Mt 13:31-32; Lk 13:18-19)
  - Weeds among wheat (Mt 13:24-30),
  - Yeast (Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21)
  - Hidden treasure and valuable pearl (Mt 13:44-46) ◦ Fishing net (Mt 13:47-50)
  - House owner (Mt 13:52)
  - Unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-31)

### 1. What is the “Kingdom of God”?

- Jesus’ central message: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news.” (Mk 1:15).
- KG/KH appears 110x in the NT mostly in the Synoptic Gospels.
- Βασιλεία θεοῦ ( *kingdom of God* ) means God is the king of kings, the almighty one who reigns and protects God’s people in a realm.
- In times of democracy, theologians replace the “kingdom of God” with the “reign of God.”

### 2. What does the Kingdom of God mean?

- Two questions:
  - Jesus never defined what the KG meant and simply assumed his Jewish audience knew what he was referring to.
  - The phrase KG never appears in the OT.
- B. Chilton’s research shows the phrase “Kingdom of God” in Aramaic (Jesus’ language) מלכותא אלהא (*malkutha-deloha*) occurs in *Isaiah Targum* (Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Isaiah) many times, as a pious circumlocution to avoid direct naming of God, to paraphrase the idea of God’s self-revelation in the end times, which reflects the Zion theology expecting God to return to the Holy Mountain in Zion, to rescue God’s people from all evil with mighty power and to make all peoples recognize God’s justice in great glory. (Bruce Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Providence of the Isaiah Targum*, pp. 77-81).

### **Targum Isaiah**

#### Isaiah 24:23b

- MT Heb because the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion.
- Targum because the kingdom of the Lord of hosts will be revealed on Mount Zion.

#### Isaiah 31:4c

- MT Heb so the Lord of hosts will descend to fight upon Mount Zion.
- Targum so the kingdom of the Lord of hosts will be revealed to dwell on Mount Zion.

Isaiah 40:9d

- MT Heb        behold your God.
- Targum        the kingdom of your God is revealed.

**3. The Kingdom of God has come near!**

- The almighty God who created universe and controls history
- Will self-reveal and intervene in human history
- To defeat the evil that terrifies God's people and
- To rescue the suffering people with mighty power,
- That all peoples may recognize God's faithfulness and glory.

**4. Jesus' Messages about the Kingdom of God**

•J. Jeremias:

1. Now is the day of salvation,
2. God's mercy for sinners,
3. The great assurance,
4. The imminence of catastrophe,
5. It may be too late,
6. The challenge of the hour,
7. Realized discipleship,
8. The via dolorosa and exaltation of the Son of Man,
9. The consummation,
10. Parabolic actions. (*The Parables of Jesus*, 115-229).

•A. Hultgren:

1. The revelation of God,
2. Exemplary behavior,
3. Wisdom,
4. Life before God,
5. Final judgment,
6. Allegorical,
7. The Kingdom. (*The Parables of Jesus*, 20-23).