

Grace Groups Homework  
**"The Promise of Progress"**

Mark 4:30–34

16 September 2018

**GETTING TO KNOW YOU**

1. Have you lived anywhere long enough that you have observed amazing growth of something over time?

**APOLOGETIC**

2. Opponents of Christianity say that it is dying and that other religions, particularly Islam, is overtaking. How can you use this parable to answer such a charge?

**INTO THE BIBLE**

3. Look up the following texts and chart the progress of the kingdom of God from a very small beginning to a glorious end. (Due to the sheer number of verses listed here, the full text is included on an extra page at the end of all the questions.)

Genesis 1:26–28

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 9:1–6

Genesis 12:1–3

Genesis 50:22–26

Exodus 1:1–7

Judges 21:25

Ruth 1:1

Micah 5:2

Daniel 2:35, 44–45

Colossians 1:6, 23

Acts 1:8

Acts 28:30–31

Revelation 7:9

4. What is necessary for the kingdom of God to extend to the nations?

What “little” (like a mustard seed) can you play in this?

How do “little things,” such as church and Grace Group attendance, daily quiet times, simple prayer, giving, etc. contribute to this?

5. Every Christian should be motivated to see the kingdom of God extended to the glory of God. How then do we maintain a God-centred motive (Matthew 6:33)? What hinders us from having this driving motive?
6. What have you learned from vv. 33–34 about the purpose of parables? Do these verses teach us anything about teaching God’s word in such a way to help hearers to be able to better hear? How can we apply this to our evangelistic efforts?
7. How do you think prayer applies to the promise of progress? How does praying for one another (James 5:16) effect the extension of the kingdom?

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As you do your regular grocery shopping, please remember to add something to your trolley to donate to the Food for the Family ministry. Regularly used items include: rice (1kg or 2kg); juice; washing powder (auto or hand wash); cooking oil (750ml or 2-litre); peanut butter; syrup; jam; tea; coffee; sandwich spread; pilchards; tuna; cake flour; baked beans; butter beans; mixed vegetables; tomato and onion mix; other canned foods; Cremora or long-life milk; pasta; noodles; condiments (tomato sauce, mustard), etc.; sugar (1kg or 2.5kg); mielie meal; bath soap; deodorant (roll-on); toothpaste. Speak to Patson Ngidi for more information.

Genesis 1:26–28—Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 3:15—I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Genesis 9:1–6—And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

Genesis 12:1–3—Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 50:22–26—So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father’s house. Joseph lived 110 years. And Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph’s own. And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Exodus 1:1–7—These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Judges 21:25—In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Ruth 1:1—In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

Micah 5:2— But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Daniel 2:35, 44–45—Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.... And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these

kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Colossians 1:5–6, 23—Of this you have heard before in] the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth ... if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Acts 1:8—But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 28:30–31—He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Revelation 7:9—After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,