

Parable of the Sower**Matthew 13:1—23**

In our last lesson we were looking at the house of Israel being cleansed of demons so that they would be able to accept Christ as their Messiah. Without this cleansing, Israel would not be able to break free of the stranglehold that Satan had on them and it would be impossible for them to accept Christ as their Messiah. The interesting thing is that if the house of Israel does not fill her house with Christ that the expunged demon would come back seven times stronger than before and take an even more determined control over the house of Israel. Since Israel as a nation rejected her Messiah and His offer of the Kingdom, these demons expelled from Israel will come back seven times stronger. I believe this will happen in the Tribulation when Satan and his demons are given much freedom to do as they please (but still under God's ultimate control).

There is Old Testament prophecy that backs this up. I believe the righteous remnant of Israel are pictured going through the Tribulation when we see Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being tossed into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). God was able to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego even though the furnace was heated seven times more than usual. Why seven times more? It seems that this indicates how intense the Tribulation will be. Israel will suffer seven times more than they would have if they had accepted Jesus as their Messiah. Notice that no matter how bad things will get in the Tribulation that Christ will be with the Little Flock to get them through the Tribulation unscathed. This does not mean that they will not die because Revelation 6:10—11 indicates that there will be many martyrs that will come out of the Tribulation. They will, however, be saved in a spiritual sense. And will be qualified to enter the Kingdom after Christ returns to earth in victory.

Christ now has been completely rejected by the nation of Israel. They have rejected Him as Prophet, Priest and King. With two years of rejection, beginning with His public ministry, Christ now turns to those who believe to concentrate on preparing them for the coming Tribulation.

Speaking in parables (verses 11—17)

A parable is a story based on real-life activities that illustrate a particular concept or truth. The Disciples and people were not surprised that He spoke to them in parables but they didn't understand the meanings of the parables. From this it could be surmised that in Jesus' day a parable was a common way of illustrating a truth.

Most people assume that a parable is used by Jesus to help us understand what He is talking about. They think this is how Jesus would illustrate His point and help people remember what was being taught. This idea seems logical but is not biblical. Verse 36 makes it clear that the Disciples didn't understand what Jesus meant by the parables He just spoke. If Jesus intended to clarify His preaching through parables then He failed completely for none of the Disciples knew what He was talking about.

According to Mark, His purpose in speaking in parables was to give truth only to those who believed while hiding the truth from those who have continually rejected His word. In other words, He was now talking to those who had ears that were ready to hear (verse 9). John 1:9 says that when Christ came into the world that He was a light that enlightened every man. Those who accepted the light were given more while those who reject the light were deprived of any more. This is why Jesus said to the Disciples that they were given the mysteries of the Kingdom. There is a point where God stops working with those who continually reject the light given to them and this perhaps explains why it is so important to reach younger people with the truth of God's word.

Mark 4:11—12 ¹¹ And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: ¹² That seeing they may see, and not perceive;

and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Matthew 13 contains seven parables all about the coming Kingdom. Jesus only explains two of them to His Disciples leaving the rest for them to figure out on their own. Jesus was giving the Disciples the information they would need in order to decipher the other parables because it was to them that was given the mysteries of the Kingdom (verse 11) and to whomever possessed this knowledge, more would be given (Verse 12). Christ is contrasting the understanding the Disciples have with the lack of understanding and perception that the unbelievers have concerning the things of the Kingdom (verse 14). The Disciples are blessed because they are the ones whose eyes have seen and whose ears have heard (verse 16). Their ability to understand and perceive was based on believing and accepting Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

Parable of the sower

This parable highlights four different types of soil and the results of planting seeds in the different soils. Jesus explains to the Disciples that the seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). Matthew makes it clear that the seed is specifically God's word concerning the Kingdom (verse 19). In fact all parables are pointing to various aspects of the Millennial Kingdom and therefore have nothing to do with the believer in the Church, the Body of Christ. All these parables have Kingdom truth.

The soils represent the various people upon which the word falls. The wayside represents people who allow Satan to take the word from their hearts so they will not believe. These people's hearts are already hardened so they will not believe. The rocky soil represent those who gladly accept the preaching of the Kingdom but quickly fall away with temptation and tribulation. Those who accept the word but allow the cares of riches and pleasures to displace the word are the thorny soil. The last soil represented is the good soil that is ready to accept and who nurtures the word in his heart. The word grows and he will be rewarded in the Kingdom.

Entrance to the Kingdom requires passing through the Tribulation. This parable, as others, has this in mind. The seed eaten by fowls represents Satan taking the word from them during the Tribulation. It will be so very difficult to be a believer that many will reject the Kingdom Gospel. Those who listen and seem to accept will be pulled away from believing by the events of the Tribulation. As soon as things get tough, they forsake what they believe and try to make it through by trusting in a satanically-controlled world. They will be trading a few years of torment for an eternal torment in Hell.

Those people who at first receive the word and then fall away are like those disciples who were following Jesus until it was too hard and then quit walking with Him (John 6:66). Those going through the Tribulation will need to endure to the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 10:21—22; 24:10—13). They need to count the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:26—33). There will be many who accept the Gospel of the Kingdom but will turn their backs on it when they face the trials that will come upon them as the Tribulation unfolds. Those who do not take the Mark of the Beast will not be able to buy and sell and therefore will be destitute of many worldly goods. This is why James demonizes the rich and praises the poor (James 2:4—5). Many will be pulled into accepting the mark so they will have the temporary riches of this world instead of the eternal riches of the Kingdom (James 4:1—3).

The good soil will produce good fruit. Only those who are attached to Christ, as a vine is attached to a branch, can produce good fruit (John 15:2—8, 16). They are not doing it in their own power but are allowing Christ to produce fruit through them. We operate under the same "law." Without Christ we are not able to produce fruit (Romans 7:4; Galatians 5:22—23). Their fruit is related to the Kingdom. They were to obey Christ and work to expand the Kingdom message. Those who did not do the work of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom and preparing Israel for the Kingdom were not bearing fruit and they will be cut off (Luke 13:1—4).

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