

## THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #014b, Part-2 A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."*

Psalm 78:2



### "The Sower, The Seed, The Soils" The Mysteries of the Kingdom Mt. 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15<sup>i</sup>

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#### INTRODUCTION – RECAP of PART-1 Who Is God and What Does He Want?

##### Last time...

We began in Matthew Chapter 12 where we briefly saw that the chapter leading up to our study of "The Sower, The Seed, and The Soils," were basically about **Jesus' authority as God** being tossed aside by the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers of the land.

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<sup>i</sup> All scriptures are from the NASB unless otherwise noted.

While they may have recognized Him as the Jewish Messiah, they had no idea of who He actually was, having rejected the messages of the prophets, or why He had come. Their fears of losing their valuable political position before the people, and with the Empire of Rome, made them willing to “destroy” Jesus, His ministry, and His followers.

We then looked at Jesus’ telling of the Parable.

[Mt 13:1-9]

*“That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. And large crowds gathered to Him, [Lk 8:4b] and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.”*

*“And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, [Mk 4:3] **“Listen to this!”** [Mt 13:3] Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed,*

*some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.*

*Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.*

*Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. [Mk 4:7b] And it yielded no crop. [Mt 13:8]*

*And others fell on the good soil and \*<sup>ii</sup>yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. [Lk 8:8b]*

*As He said these things,  
He would call out, 'He who has ears, let him hear.'"*

And then we looked at the Disciples question that they put to Jesus.

*[Mt 13:10] "And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" [Mark 4:13]*

*And He says to them, "Do you not understand this parable?"*

*How will you understand all the parables? [Mt 13:11]*

*Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,*

*but to them it has not been granted."*

And finally we explored the mystery of Jesus' hiding of certain truths from the unbelieving crowd, scribes, and Pharisees. Their unbelief (terminal unbelief, not the temporary unbelief that comes before true belief) had brought upon them a deep division

because they were being taught by God the Son (in person), in the power of God the Father, by the agency of God the Spirit

and they not only would not believe... but they were plotting to destroy Him. No chance for repentance would be presented to them.

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<sup>ii</sup> Translated in the "Historical Past." The Greek language often speaks in a story as if things were happening at that moment when they happened in the past. Thus, in this case, Jesus said, "And others fell on the good soil and yields a crop." The translators changed the tense to make the statement more understandable in our day.

Now in this second part of the lesson we will explore Jesus' **EXPLANATION of the parable.**

Just above, Mark revealed to us that the disciples didn't understand the simple telling of this parable and Jesus asked (because they did not understand THIS parable), "**How will you understand all the parables?**"

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What is there about this parable that is so important?  
Let's look and see.

As we enter the seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, seven being the "perfect" number - pointing to these seven parables as very important to understand, we need to remember what we learned in part-1. Jesus has transitioned **from** teaching the Jews about who God is and His love for them **to** teaching His disciples the basic principles of the coming Kingdom of Heaven - The Authority of God among His people - the Gentiles, what we would call Christendom that will begin with the Book of Acts.

**First**, we need to repeat, and we'll say it again, the big lesson from Part-1. God has granted to those who belong to Him "**to know the mysteries of this coming kingdom of heaven!**"

[Remembering...] Matthew 13:10-11 says, "Then the disciples came to him and said, "Why do you speak to them [a large crowd on the shore of a lake] in parables?" He replied, "You have been given the opportunity to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but they have not."

Using a modern term we could say that Jesus uses parables as a kind of "**filter**" that helps with hiding certain truths from "those who have **not** been given the opportunity to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven."

In these messages I want to make it absolutely clear that Almighty God, as revealed in the scriptures, reveals Himself in three "persons." I'll say that again. He is one God... and reveals Himself in three persons. God the Father is God, God the Son [Jesus] is God, God the Holy Spirit is God – and they are God. This is the revelation of Him in the scriptures.

Without getting too technical, before the incarnation of Jesus (taking on the form of a human, born as a baby, growing up and dying as a man) and after His resurrection and ascension back to heaven, He was and continues to be God.

During His on-the-earth human life, as God He voluntarily gave up expressing certain attributes of His Godliness and willingly became reliant upon His heavenly Father and the Spirit of God. He did this in order to be the "servant" in the program of His Father in the forgiveness and payment of the sin penalty that came about by the first man Adam. He was, during that time, fully God, but fully reliant upon His heavenly father.

Typically, we speak of each of the three persons of God by name when we are focusing on the actions and characteristics of the individual – but we should never forget that all three are absolutely and completely one God.

All illustrations of this relationship are flawed because the exact nature of God is beyond our complete comprehension. An old friend used one illustration that, for me, perhaps comes closer than others. Water! Water can exist as a solid (ice), a liquid (flowing water), and a vapor (moisture/vapor) all at the same time. This happens at between 31.5 and 32 degrees Fahrenheit – all three forms exist at the single moment... yet, each form is still H<sub>2</sub>O (water). It's not a perfect illustration, but it helps getting the point across. I bring this up because it seems that so many separate Jesus the man, from the idea of God in the scriptures.

You will only get the importance of Jesus' words in all of Scripture if you understand that He is God saying these words. Here's just one example: [Mt 4:17] [Mk 1:15] "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand..." As Jesus speaks these words, I can see Him extending His hand... and those around Him refuse to see that Jesus, God the King of that kingdom, is standing there speaking to them... "at hand."

### **The Big Picture**

We said this in Part-1 but it needs saying again, this parable is not about how you should act or react to what Jesus has to say. This parable is about Him – not about you.

We've all heard so many teachers and preachers going on and on about how we need to identify what kind of soil we are and work toward becoming "The good soil." Nope! This parable is all about who God is and What He has done (and doing). So, don't look for yourself in His explanation of the parable... **look for who He is.**

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## **THE PARABLE of the SOWER – SEED - SOILS explained**

### **THE SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW HIS SEED**

[Lk 8:5A] *the sower went out to sow his seed; [Lk 8:11] the seed is the word of God.*

Jesus begins to explain His parable. He's going to build His imagery upon that of a farmer – and that image is so appropriate – The farmer owns the land, he tills the land for an expected crop yield, he sows the seed, he waters and weeds for the whole growing season. The seed produces plants that grow on their own and multiply, and then he harvests the full yield, separating the good from the bad. This is exactly how God is revealing His

relationship to what is going on down here on earth. It's His earth, Humans are His land, He tills our environment for His purposes, He sows His Holy Word, like seed upon us, He waters and feeds, some grow (spiritually), some die (spiritually). So, if you have eyes to see and ears to hear... see and hear what He has to say.

In our image we need to know who the farmer is. Because of the seriousness of the consequences of where the seeds fall, we can rule out just anyone sowing this important seed. The sower of this seed is God Himself. We cannot just say that the sower is anyone because just anyone cannot dictate how, or if, the seed will grow.

We're also told that the seed is "the Word of God." He may use missionaries, clergy, the educated, the uneducated, the important, the unimportant person as the tool of His sowing – but it is God who sows His word. The seed He sows is His Word, in New Testament terms it is The Gospel.

Remembering that He is no longer speaking of His relationship with Israel - they have rejected Him - Now He is discussing these future things with His Disciples in preparation of His death, resurrection, and ascension.

We'll be looking for **two** kinds of people and **four** kinds of soils. It will break down this way... 1 – One kind of people will be broken down into three kinds [by the side of the road soil], [rocky soil], [thorny soil]. No growth value at the end. 2 – The other kind of people will be called "good soil." Full seed growth value at the end. Nowhere in the parable, or the surrounding text, does it say that the soils can change.

## **The Text:**

[Mt 13:18] *"Hear then the parable of the sower.*

This then is His command... **"you, hear** then the parable of the sower!"

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## **THE SEED SOWN BESIDE THE ROAD The**

### **Parable:**

[Lk 8:5b] *and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds-of-the-air ate it up.*

***"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."***

As we keep our focus on the authority of God as the sower.. think through this verse and see if you can come up with a reason why the "soil," the person upon whom the "seed" falls (beside the road) has anything to do with the outcome of the seed. You should come up with a conclusion that says "God sowed the seed; some fell on this person (beside the road), it was trampled; and then the birds ate it.

The point is the Sower sowed the seed, it got trampled; and the birds ate it up. It doesn't look to you the hearer to figure out how the person could have prevented or changed the situation. Jesus is describing the "type" of this person that the Word of God has fallen upon. The person who is called "beside the road," takes no action. Jesus' words pointedly leave that out and tells us "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

### **Jesus' Explanation:**

[Mt 13:19a] *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it (hear or see it); [Lk 8:12b] then the devil [Satan, the evil one] comes and [Mt 13:19b] snatches away what has been sown in his heart, [Lk 8:12c] so that they will not believe and be saved. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.*

Then Jesus explains His words in this part of the parable. He uses the word "kingdom" to emphasize that "The Kingdom of God is at hand." He says that this one who has heard... hears the word... **but does not understand it.** You see The Lord has done pretty much everything He can... He's sown the word of God into the man's heart but because he is not able to "hear" it, he does not understand it. In the first three situations that follow, the Word of God is sown and the individuals are not willing to hear what the Word has to say to them and thus each one does not, in the end result, "hear."

In a secondary action Satan comes and removes the word from his heart. Each individual will be found to be responsible for their actions. In this case the devil came and removed the word of God from his heart so that he will not believe and be saved! He, the person, chose to listen to the devil and not to the Word of God. Our first type-1 person – No seed value at the end.

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### **THE SEED SOWN ON ROCKY SOIL The Parable:**

*[Mt 13:5] Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil [Lk 8:6b] and because it had no moisture. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."***

### **Jesus' Explanation:**

*[Mk 4:16] In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, [Mt 13:20] this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but [belief] is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.*

Again, it is important to carefully read Jesus' words especially in His explanation; [Mk 4:16b] "seed was sown on the rocky places." We shouldn't have the idea that the sower just tossed His seed and it happened to fall on "rocky places." Jesus said, "seed was sown on the rocky places." You see each of the locations had seed sown on them as part of the sower's purpose. God sows His Word upon ALL, not just the good soils, not just upon those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. His love demands that ALL have the opportunity to believe, to trust, to have faith, to be saved, to be born from above... but not all will allow themselves to see or hear – for their own reasons. Israel, with the exception of the continuing remnant, has had the deep and rich blessing of the Lord for thousands of generations, and yet they have continually rejected their God and Savior – as have great multitudes of Gentiles (non-Jews). God's love extends to all, but His salvation offer is largely rejected.

In this particular case there's "not much soil." Perhaps a sprinkling of sand upon the top of a rock. No depth, and no moisture. Perhaps we could say there's no place set aside by the one upon whom this seed falls. No interest in cultivation or watering the Word that has been sown upon him. So, the offer of God's Word just withers away.

Our second type-1 person – No seed value at the end.

### **THE SEED SOWN AMONG THE THORNS The Parable:**

[Mt 13:22] *Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. [Mk 4:7b] and it yielded no crop. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

### **Jesus' Explanation:**

[Mt 13:18-19] *And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard*

*the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things [pleasures] enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Let's think about the "thorns." Three kinds are mentioned here. First, "The worries of the world." What do we worry about? Money, our family, getting what we want, relationships, sex, physical health, our possessions, and the list goes on.

Second, "the deceitfulness of riches." With riches comes power, with power comes corruption – getting our way because we have money and power. What does God think about that? It's thorny ground and it "chokes out" God's word and His offer of salvation.

Third and finally, "the desires for other things [pleasures]." Having stuff, materialism, is rampant in our human world – as is the desire for pleasure, all kinds of pleasure and it all can "choke" the Word of God's effectiveness. Those who are "thorny ground" cannot see the value of God's Word. It doesn't "satisfy" them because Its effectiveness has been choked out. Our third type-1 person – No seed value at the end.

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## **THE SEED SOWN ON THE GOOD SOIL The Parable:**

*[Mt 13:8a] And others fell on the good soil, [Mk 4:8b] and as they grew up and increased, [Mt 13:8b] and yields a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."***

### **Jesus Explanation:**

*[Mt 13:23a] And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it [Lk 8:15b] with an honest and good heart with perseverance; [Mt 13:23b] who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."*

The one on whom seed was sown on the good soil: Finally, the Type-2 person... the full value of the seed was realized.

We should look and also see what the characteristics of this person should be. 1 – hears the word of God, 2 – understands the word of God, 3 – has, and uses, an honest and good heart... with perseverance. 4 – They bear fruit.

The divisions of fruit bearing indicate that not all believers bear the same quantity of fruit.

There's no indication of that being a good or bad process. Some are prayer warriors, some are missionaries, some interact with neighbors and friends, some... give their lives, and some lose their lives for Christ. Some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." All true believers bear fruit.

In lesson 12 we talked about just "Who was Jesus' true family." We listened to Jesus tell us, [Lk 8:21] *"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."* [Mt 12:50] *For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."* The seed is sown upon the individual and those who hear the seed - the word of God... and do it... become the children of God, they become the brothers and sisters of His Son Jesus. Those who don't... don't.

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*"Starlight Sower"<sup>iii</sup>*

I really like this painting above. While it doesn't show the seed falling to the ground on the two kinds of people, it does show God's purpose in sowing His seed. Creating a people unto Himself – one at a time and releasing them into His Kingdom.

### **SUMMARY AND APPLICATIONS**

So, God sows His seed, the Word of God. He sows it everywhere He wills. He sows it on those who are not going to receive it – those beside the road, those in the rocky places, and those choked out by thorns. He leaves no spot unsown. His Son died on the Cross for "all the world." The seed was sown – will Faith sprout up? Yes, but only in those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

I have left one fact to speak to for this late moment in the lesson. Jesus' whole discussion about this parable is not about any singular point in time. All of us are given a lifetime (however long that may be is up to God) to reach our final destination. At the end of the road we see each judgment call of the individual... not

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<sup>iii</sup> "Starlight Sower," Hai Knafo, Psalm 97:11 "Light is sown for the righteous" Public Domain [the image has been cropped for use here]

at any particular moment before then. Many of us know of pastors and elders, deacons and just people who come to the Lord late in life, some after years of service that wasn't specifically done for the Lord God. We even know some who have seemingly lived their Christian lives for a long time and have wandered off at the end. Some even come moments before death. So don't judge an individual as to their eternal destination - God may take their lifetime to "bring them home," or He may take them home way early in their lives. Focus upon your life, your relationship to Jesus Christ, and your ministry to those you love - your family, your friends, your neighbors no matter how close or far they may be.

### **The Question**

The question that arises is... "Who are you?" You see, the parable teaches us there are multiple circumstances, but only two destinations. Are you one who sees and hears the Word of God and acts upon it in faith. Or not?

On your "Day of Decision," as Billy Gramm used to say, did you, are you, will you be found to be a true believer in Jesus, God, Savior? Does the Word of God speak to you? Has the "Seed" fallen upon you and you have received it? If not... there is still time... until there isn't anymore.

What's the message for we who believe? The message is that God loves every single human on the face of this planet. He want's none to be "lost." But He also has made it so that each and every one of us is responsible for the one big choice of accepting or rejecting His offer of salvation and eternal life. So, for we who believe... we need to be carriers of God's seed - His Word. We need to be those who faithfully represent Him in this world. We need to take every opportunity to offer Jesus to our family, friends, neighbors and strangers - as God leads.

We, as believers are called by God to serve Him, especially by bringing testimony and witness to His loving character and saving Grace. We are to understand that not everyone can be reached for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but that our ministry and calling is the spreading of the Gospel and not the actual work of saving anyone – That's God's authoritative work. He calls, He ordains, He elects, He adopts, He appoints His Holy Spirit. His word is the key to growth and life in Him.

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## FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

**1.** In this parable, who is the Sower?  
The Sower is God Almighty.

**2.** Why use the analogy of a Sower?  
Jesus wanted His hearers to identify with something they all would be familiar – a farmer. The farmer owns the land, he tills the land for an expected crop yield, he sows the seed, he waters and weeds for the whole growing season, and then he harvests the full yield, separating the good from the bad. This is exactly what He wants them to see about Who God is and what He does.

**3.** Explain the three bad soils where the seed is sown?  
First, the seed sown by the side of the road – No Yield.  
Second, the seed sown on Rocky Ground – No Yield. Third, the seed sown in the weeds – No Yield.

**4.** Explain the one good soil where the seed is sown?  
God expects a yield to come from only one kind of soil, the soil He calls good. Where the Word of God is sown and accepted, believed, and has growth and Yield.

**5.** What's the conclusion to be reached?  
God knows the soils and the expected yield. Jesus reveals that the soils are the people upon whom the Word of God is sown.

[Mt 13:23a] And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it [Lk 8:15b] with an honest and good heart with perseverance; [Mt 13:23b] who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

**6.** Who are you, what kind of soil are you, what are you going to do about it?

This is up to you!

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"

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