

# THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

(Mt 13:1-23; Mk 4:1-20; Lk 8:4-15)

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I will begin with this parable because it is one of the few explained in detail, and also because in Mark 4:13 Jesus makes it clear that the proper understanding of it will be crucial in understanding other parables. Also it must be understood that for the sake of clarity, I have used a 'Combined Gospel' New Testament so that significant information won't be excluded.

In Matthew 13:3, Jesus tells this parable: **“Behold, the sower went forth to sow: and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside (and it was trodden under foot), and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them (and they yielded no fruit): and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears, let him hear.”**

Jesus then goes on to explain the parable beginning at verse 18: **“Hear then ye the parable of the sower. (The seed is the word of God.) When anyone heareth the word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one (Satan), and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart (that he may not believe and be saved). This is he that was sown by the way side. And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth (who for a while believe, and in time**

of temptation fall away.) And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches (and the pleasures of this life), (and the lusts of other things entering in) choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that (in an honest and good heart) heareth the word, and understandeth it (and accept it); who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

At first it seems pretty straightforward: some people don't bear fruit because Satan takes the word out of their hearts; some people don't bear fruit because they are too superficial, and therefore do not allow the word to grow in their hearts; still others are too interested in pleasures and materialism to allow the word to change them; while the ones with good hearts will grow in the word. All of this is true, but there's more here than meets the eye.

In all three accounts, the order is the same; first the road, then the rocky places, then the thorny places, and then the field with the good soil. This can be further expounded. When people wear sandals, and their animals walk with them along a road, rocks pose a danger, not to mention a great deal of pain and discomfort, so naturally all of the larger and sharper rocks get kicked off to the side of the road. Between the road and the field, one would expect to find a drainage ditch, which is a natural place for weeds to grow. Finally, beyond the ditch would lie the field. So it is evident that we have a vivid and logical picture of a man walking in a straight line from a road to a field.

It is also worth mentioning that throughout His exposition, Jesus refers to the various patches of ground as “**he that...**” or in other words, the different types of ground represent different kinds of people. So since we have seen that the order of the soils

is important, then it is evident that these soils represent various people in a particular order. In other words the 'way side' people precede the 'rocky place' people, who in turn precede the 'thorny place' people, who also precede the 'good soil' people. This is a parable that involves time and sequence.

It is obviously the Christians who receive the word, but the first ones mentioned have the word taken from them by Satan. This is a picture of the early Church, and the process of selection and canonization of the Scriptures. The words that Satan took away from them must represent the books they themselves rejected, since the words were taken out of their hearts so that they might not believe. Notice that the heart is the crucial thing here. In other words, there were certain Scriptures which they did not accept as precious, and were therefore vulnerable to attack by the enemy. The apocryphal books were not considered authentic by many Church leaders, and were therefore condemned except for the few that represent the difference between the Catholic canon and the Protestant canon. This first example refers cryptically to the period of time leading up to the first official proclamation of the canon in the late fourth century.

As a result of so many books having been removed, there arose the need for men to try and explain things through philosophy and theology. But the assumption we as believers tend to make is that the books that were rejected could not have been inspired, or else they wouldn't have been rejected in the first place. This clearly circular reasoning assumes that God could not possibly have arranged for these books to be removed and restored at a later date. The beauty of this belief is that it is the very mechanism by which God is able to pull this amazing feat off before our very eyes. These people, relying upon their own wisdom, represent the 'rocky place' people. Since they chose to rely on their own ideas as opposed to God's, they can

therefore be seen as having no root in themselves. This period of time reached its fulfillment sometime during the 17th century, when the Protestant Churches dropped the apocryphal books that were left in the Bible because their ‘authenticity’ was called into question. Thus they were ‘scorched’.

Of course by this time world trade and world exploration were well underway, and had been for some time, and as a result the exchange of goods brought with it an exchange of ideas, and the one thing that practically everybody understood was money. With the whole world now within reach, religious ideals gradually began to give way to more secular concerns. This has more or less been the trend up to this time. We see the world now in an unparalleled state of materialism and hedonism and the lust for power. When this present generation will be presented with these mysteries, many will reject them, of course, since so many are so worldly. They will be deceived, or ‘choked’, by their riches.

Those who will accept the apocryphal books, along with the mysteries that are being revealed by God in these last days will be the ‘good soil’ people. These are the Elect ones that are spoken of in places like Mark 13:20, and much more in the apocryphal books. They will be able to expound parables and reveal mysteries when they arrive at last, since they will both ‘understand’ and ‘accept’ the word. This shall be the generation that bears the fruit.