

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 1 - Study 8 Kingdom Hearts hunger for God's Word and experience Kingdom Living even in Tribulation and Persecution

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: Matthew 13, Jesus taught to his disciples that the kingdom of heaven is like the parables of the sower and of the mustard seed. Good seed is for finding good ground, and Bible study bears good fruit out of a good and noble heart.

Studies - The Kingdom of God Parable of the Sower: 'take heed how you hear and how you see'.

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These are brief studies, not
“teachings” or “doctrines.

Volume 1, Study 8

The Parable of the Sower

Kingdom hearts hunger for God’s Word and experience kingdom living even amidst tribulation and persecution.

Matthew 13:16-18) But blessed are your [i.e. the disciples’] eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Many many *just* and **righteous** ones have not, and do not, and will not be given (to see in God-given-*understanding*) the kind of words of which Jesus is speaking to his disciples in these parables. Those to **see**, as in the manner of Jesus’ disciples, are chosen for a unique work and thus are chosen to **see** these kingdom-parables. Note that before Jesus enabled them to hear (within his explanations to them) their lack of understanding was on a par with that of the multitudes.

Such things are entirely of God and do not, indeed cannot, depend on the willingness of the hearers (or the type of ground upon which the seed-word of the kingdom falls) as in the Parable of the Sower below.

Moreover, Jesus’ description of the kind of ground receiving such seed-words (in the parable) does not in any way label certain ground as “not *just*” and/or “not **righteous**”. We must take Jesus words for what they are and not make more or less out of them. Please be aware that there were many *just* and **righteous** men and women not chosen of the Father to be Jesus’ disciples. Only a few.

Eyes for seeing and ears for hearing in this passage have to do with those chosen to **see** and **hear** such things, and it is worked out by God. And, we must stop condemning any brethren who do not see and hear what we claim to see and hear. Lord Jesus and Holy Father please help us!

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

13:19) When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in [i.e. broadcast or thrown upon the ground of] his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

The word **understand** is a verb and is made up of two words *union* and *to send*, that is, *to send for union*. In the mental process, it means to take what has been received by the ear and ‘send it’ for ‘union’ to and with the brain, that is, for processing in the brain what has been sent to it. When this process is accomplished then the thing received is **understood** or **comprehended**, etc. Therefore, when we read this verse we typically process it in our brain with the concept of “understanding” the verse because the very word ‘understand’ is in the verse, biasing us to think that we are supposed to ‘understand’

Jesus' words with the brain.

Indeed, we Christians have become brain washed by our egos, combined with our church environment of preaching and teaching, that we are supposed to "get it" or "understand it") so as "to apply it to our lives to become more holy or Christ-like or spiritually productive, etc." Ah, but with our thinking process, we all know that when we think we understand something (spiritual or of the world) we find out later that we do not understand and only when we really understand do we know the difference. Sometimes this latter process is painful, relearning what we thought we knew (or still do not know.)

But for a while here let us try to limit our "thinking process" to actually consider (i.e. not necessarily come to a conclusion) the other words. We need to do this because the seed-words are broadcast upon the **heart**. For actually it is not a "thinking about what is heard" process, but a "seed growing in the heart" process, which has its varied seasons.

We see that **the word** was **received** something like a seed broadcast into the air to fall on the ground (the word falling upon the ear). Ah, but ground on which it falls is the **heart**. In scripture, 'heart' nearly always represents the seat or place of our desires and longings. If we have what we desire then we want to keep it, and if we do not have a desire then we long to get or **receive** it. In concept, this means that we usually do not desire to receive something that is not already a longing of the **heart**.

In the **heart** of each person are many desires and longings about many and varied things. Initially Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude of God's people Israel, but it is the disciples whom he especially wants to **receive** his words *into* their **hearts** for processing. Each Christian's **heart** has varying degrees of space that is willing to **receive** more of God's seed-words, OR his or her **heart** is so full of differing desires and longings that seed-words of the kingdom do not "sink in or penetrate" to germinate and take root in the **heart**.

Where Barbara and I live, there are several small subdivisions out of town that were built upon old hayfields. The roads (i.e. **by ways**) in them are gravelled. Sometimes some of the tough weed seeds, which float everywhere in the wind, lands on the **by ways**. With moisture from rain or snow, even the gravel covering the **by way** becomes pliable enough for weed seed **sent** from the weed plants to **union** (i.e. merge) themselves with the soil beneath the gravel for the timely process of germinating and growing weed plants right in the **by ways**.

Ah, but we have many birds of varying kinds in our differing seasons that live or visit here. They surely snack on many seeds. Easy places to find seed is on our **by ways**. However, grass seed from the yards and empty lots that are still parts of the old hayfields cannot penetrate the surface of the **by way**. It is like: "the **by ways** in **receiving** many seeds only accept (i.e. allow **union** of) certain kinds of seed" ...even as the **heart** of each Christian has it priorities.

Christians with a **by ways** type of **heart** continue to **receive** word-seeds of the kingdom, because our loving Father sees to it that we all **receive** such words upon our **hearts**. However, by birds or by winds or by other outside influences God's seed-words of the kingdom can be carried away if they are not quickly taken in union with the **heart**.

Please note that Jesus is specifically speaking of **the word of the kingdom**; for many are the other words of God in His Holy Word. The people of Israel, including the disciples, were very familiar with God's words in their Bible (the Old Testament). Indeed, they knew their Bible far better than most Christians today know their Bibles.

Yet, Jesus had arrived straight from heaven, and God the Father and the Son were presently teaching *chosen ones* regarding **the word of the kingdom**.

13:20) But he that received the seed into stony places [i.e. away from the by ways and in the field], the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

The meaning of **anon** as an adjective is *straight* or *level* or *true* depending on its usage in the context. Its adverb form means *at once* (i.e. straight to the point). This type of Christian receives **the word of the kingdom** upon his **heart** even as did the first type of Christian, but this one *at once* gladly allows the **sent** word into **union** with the **heart** where it germinates, takes root, and begins its process of growing.

Note again that we are not speaking of the thinking process, but speaking instead of the internal process...wherein the seed of **the word of the kingdom** works out the Father's will in the **heart**. There are many words and works of God, but Jesus is making it clear that **the word of the kingdom** is entirely in its own classification...that is, specifically for the type of Christians that have desires greater toward the kingdom than are their lesser desires regarding their worldly, and necessary, human affairs.

This particular type of Christian receives this particular type of seed-word with *true joy* and his life *at once* reflects his **joy**. However, **joy** is *not fruit of the kingdom*. Manifesting such fruit has to do with growing seasons because the **seed-and-heart** process must work itself out in the inner man. Note again that it is not a "thinking process".

13:21) Yet hath he not root in himself, but [en]dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

The meaning of **offended** is *entrapped*. Picture a tender growing sapling that is suddenly noticed by a wicked one and the wicked one throws a strong net upon the sapling, pressing it down. Due to the ongoing process within the inner man, enough growth has manifested itself (which is different from the initial **joy**) to attract the wicked one who then goes to work. The wicked one has many kinds of nets and has many ways of throwing his nets. He is adapt at doing so in churches (indeed, the apostles were always trying to put out fires of dissention in the early churches, as evidenced in their writings).

This type of Christian (in his unique and true desire toward the kingdom of God) had accepted **the word of the kingdom** into his **heart** without having taken the time to assess the *affects* of the ongoing process. This process is well documented in the many stories and accounts of men and women mentioned in Scripture (a collection of which is in God's Hook).

Indeed, God had placed many stories in the Old Testament for the child of God who is gladly yielding to Him, and then becomes *entrapped* due to **tribulation and/or persecution**. When this happens it is typically because the child of God is not well versed in the Bible, but instead is dependent more on teaching, preaching, Christian books, etc. about doctrine-and-duty than about his or her *singular* walk before God in faith.

Here, then, is Jesus' concern in explaining to his disciples the meaning of this parable. It is what this parable is about. The parable is not about the seed-word of the kingdom, but instead it is about the kind of ground (i.e. **hearts**) upon which the seed falls. Jesus is not concerned about the **hearts** of the disciples **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven** (verses 11, 16, and 17).

Yet, in his preparing the disciples for their duties as apostles, Jesus wants them educated about the kind of Christians with whom they will be working (i.e. 'feeding'). And he wants them to know that joyful and growing ones (as regarding the kingdom) will surely experience some sort of **tribulation or persecution** [which] **ariseth because of the [kingdom] word**, and that **by and by** some of them will become **offended** (i.e. *entrapped*)...and their kingdom-sapling will die.

This could (and did) become very disheartening to the apostles in their duties. Indeed, their own duties caused much **tribulation or persecution** to themselves, and then observing in the churches young kingdom-saplings dying out was almost too much to bear.

13:22) He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh un-

fruitful.

This type of Christian surely receives the seed-word of the kingdom as joyfully as the second type; however, he continues to grow and, in fact, does not die. Since **tribulation or persecution** [which] **ariseth because of the** [kingdom] **word** also comes from the wicked one to this type of Christian, we see that this type will be able to ‘*stand in the evil day*’. This type of Christian, in fact, has assessed the affects of the seed-word of the kingdom (having studied such affects as clearly documented in Scripture).

Even so, the very nature of this fallen world has its affects upon all Christians. Some Christians personally and truly being drawn towards kingdom things (instead of preferring the things of the world) will allow the kingdom-sapling growing in them to be choked by certain worldly things that are particularly attractive to their **hearts**. Indeed, “being aware of and avoiding the devices of the wicked one” can take up so much of one’s attention that he or she can be blindsided by good and profitable worldly things.

Such good and worldly things also can weave their nets like spider webs. This kind of Christian *may well allow goodly love* of family and friends and church and such (which things are in the world) to entangle him and keep his growth stunted...even as his kingdom-sapling reaches upward toward the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said that to follow him first (in pursuit of kingdom things) one must place spouse, children, etc. in lesser priority in the **heart**. Otherwise (per Jesus’ parable-words) the kingdom-sapling will become **choked**. Therefore, this sapling-trying-to-grow-into-a-tree becomes **unfruitful** when the season for fruiting arrives. (Note what Jesus did to the unfruitful fig tree in Matthew 21:19-21.)

This may seem harsh. Indeed, many disciples following Jesus were leaving the inner group of disciples as they were drawn by these good but worldly things. (Therefore, the sapling of the kingdom [though **choked** and thus to become unfruitful regarding kingdom things] remains alive in the **heart**.)

The twelve disciples had already witnessed as much. They also knew (i.e. experienced) the harshness of it, but could not themselves leave Jesus. (Perhaps this is what happened to the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-30.) Only later did the Twelve come to **understand** (i.e. amidst the **heart**) that they, out of others, had been chosen.

13:23) But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

This type of Christian (Jesus is speaking only in reference to **the word of the kingdom**) is of the **good ground** type. The *first type* of Christian makes for a good road (i.e. a **by way**) to help people move from place to place. The *second type* provides stones for buildings and perhaps for altars. The *third type* is as steadfast as the *second type* regarding the kingdom of God...and he may well be the type that financially supports many of *this fourth type*.

This *fourth type* **received the sent word**, took it into his **heart** for **union**, and allowed nothing to interrupt the process of becoming a tree...fruitful in its seasons of fruitfulness. The size of the tree, its kind of fruitfulness, and its amount of fruitfulness are entirely of God the Father...who broadcasts **the word of the kingdom** out upon His ground.

Some types of fruit and their purposes require quite a large tree to bear fruit, which takes a long time over many unfruitful growing seasons. See the kingdom parable of The Grain of Mustard Seed.



Note that Jesus spoke the Parable of the Sower to the multitudes (13:1-3). Later the disciples separately approached Jesus to ask about the parable (13:10). Such asking is good. Then

Jesus explained it to them. The Parable of the Sower is not about the kingdom; instead it is about the *ground* upon which God broadcasts seed-words of the kingdom.

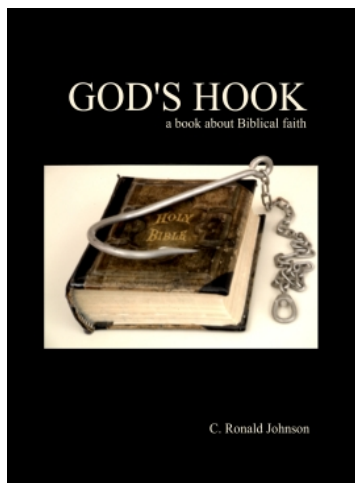
Therefore following, we read of the Parable of the Tares (13:24-30) (see also Volume 1-Study 6)...and read of the Parable of the Grain of Mustard Seed...and read of the Parable of the Leaven. In 13:34-36 we see that Jesus spoke these *kingdom-parables* to the multitudes...while in private he explained some of them to his disciples. (In scripture, some are explained to us and some are not explained.) In 13:44 is the Parable of the Treasure in a Field...and in 45-46 is the Parable of the Pearl...and in 47-50 is the Parable of the Net and the Ingathering. All of the parables mentioned in this paragraph are *kingdom parables*.

The Parable of the Sower was given to the disciples to prepare them for **hearing** the *kingdom-parables*. The Parable of the Sower serves the same purpose today. To repeat: The Parable of the Sower is not itself a *kingdom-parable*. Instead it is about the kind of ground, as described by Jesus, which makes up God's people.

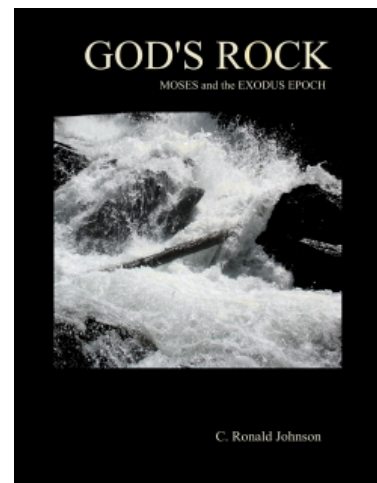
Additionally, this parable makes very clear (indeed it is a promise) that God continually broadcasts His seed-word of the kingdom out upon His ground. This ground is all of His people, as they go about their daily walk in this world.

13:9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press



a book
about
Biblical
Faith



the life of
Moses
and the
Exodus