



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God



Part 11

"The Parables of the Messiah" 1 of 2

4-25-21

Introduction: The Kingdom of Messiah

- In the most basic sense, the kingdom of God should be understood as the rule of God over His creation. Although His rule is eternal, He administers His rule on earth through His chosen representatives.
 "...there is an eternal aspect as well as a temporal aspect; it has a universal nature as well as a local nature; or there is an immediate sense of the kingdom in which God rules directly, and a mediated sense of the kingdom in which God rules indirectly through appointed representatives."
 —Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come*
- In the Davidic Covenant, the Lord promised that His rule on earth would be accomplished through one of David's descendants who would be king over Israel forever (1 Chron. 17:11-15). The prophets anticipated the coming of Messiah to establish Israel in their land (Ezek. 37:24-28) and to rule all the nations (Zech. 9:9-10).
- Jesus was the promised Davidic king and the kingdom that He proclaimed was the promised Messianic kingdom. Although He called Israel to repent in order to receive Him as their king, most refused to believe in Him or the message He proclaimed. The result was the unveiling of an aspect of God's kingdom program which had been hidden in other ages. This mystery would be entrusted to Jesus' followers but would be hidden from those who did not believe in Him.

Key Point: Having been rejected by Israel's religious leaders, the Lord Jesus began to teach in parables in order that His followers might gain _____ into God's plans and purposes while His opponents were further _____ against Him.

The Lord's Teaching in Parables— The Parable of the Sower (the Soils)

The Parable— Mark 4:4-9

- Following His encounter with the Jerusalem scribes, Jesus began a transition in His _____ ministry.
Mark 4:1-2a—¹ Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ² And he was teaching them many things in parables...

"parable"— The placing of one thing alongside another in order that a comparison may be made between the two.

"...a parable denotes an extended comparison between nature or life and the things involving the spiritual life and God's dealings with men."
 —Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*

- Jesus' first parable employed _____ imagery that would have been familiar to His audience.
Mark 4:3— "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow..."

"In the first parable, a sower successfully sows the seed. The success of the seed, however, depends on the soil. The parable emphasizes the disparity on the results in different soils."
 —David Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*

Soil Type:

- "along the path"
- "on rocky ground"
- "among thorns"
- "good soil"

Result:

- " _____ " by birds.
- " _____ " by the sun.
- " _____ " by thorns.
- " _____ " " _____ " " _____ "

- Jesus' exhortation at the end of the parable _____ that the imagery had a discernable though veiled meaning.
Mark 4:9— And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

⇒ Agricultural imagery is used in the OT regarding God's blessing (Hos. 2:23) as well as His judgment (Isa. 40:24). It is also used in reference to the power of God's Word to go forth and accomplish its purpose (Isa. 55:10-11) and as a warning to God's people not to harden themselves against Him (Jer. 4:3-4).

Key Point: If Jesus' hearers were sensitive to the teachings of _____, they would be able to gain some insight into the meaning of the parable.

The Purpose of the Parables—Mark 3:10-12

- After teaching the crowd, His close followers came to Him to ask about the parable's _____.

Mark 4:10-12—¹⁰ And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹² so that "THEY MAY INDEED SEE BUT NOT PERCEIVE, AND MAY INDEED HEAR BUT NOT UNDERSTAND, LEST THEY SHOULD TURN AND BE FORGIVEN."

⇒ The Lord's response highlighted the distinction between those "around" Him (His followers) who would be given understanding of the kingdom and those who were "outside" who would fail to understand. To further explain this dual purpose to His teaching, He quoted from the commissioning of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 6:8-10).

The Mission of Isaiah

More than any other prophet, Isaiah came to proclaim to Israel the coming salvation that would be accomplished for them and the nations (Isa. 49:5-6) through Messiah who would bear their sins (Isa. 53:5-6) and establish His kingdom on the earth (Isa. 60:1-3). *Their rejection of the prophet's message meant that they came under God's judgment which ultimately served His purposes in the history of salvation (Exile → Return → Occupation by the Gentiles).*

Key Point: Like Isaiah, Jesus will proclaim the Word of the Lord as opposition increases against Him. This will not thwart God's plans, however, and will ultimately be the _____ by which the work of salvation is accomplished.

The Parable Explained—Mark 4:13-20

- Jesus then interpreted the parable for the disciples who had _____ to understand it.

Mark 4:13—And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

The Seed & the Sower:

The Soils:

1. Those who are hardened towards the Word. ("the ones along the path")

Hinderance: _____ ("the birds") Result:

2. Those who receive the Word superficially. ("the ones on rocky ground")

Hinderance: _____ ("the sun") Result:

3. Those who receive the Word amidst other things. ("the ones among thorns")

Hinderance: _____ ("the thorns") Result:

4. Those who receive the Word in faith. ("the ones on good soil")

Result:

Key Point: The parable serves as both a _____ and an _____ to the followers of Jesus, inviting them to receive His Word and to participate in its success in the world.

Concluding Thoughts

1. The 'Parable of the Sower' invites us to consider our own receptivity to the Word of the Lord.

What are the tendencies of our own hearts?

Who are our enemies?

2. The 'Parable of the Sower' reminds us that Christ bears _____ in us by the power of His Word.

John 15:5— I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.