

Sunday, May 15, 2011—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 4:1-20: The Parable of the Sower

Introduction

- Today we are going to be studying the parable of the sower. In order to do this in an orderly manner we will break the parable up into the following three sections.
 - Section 1: Jesus teaches the parable
 - Section 2: The disciples question Jesus
 - Section 3: Jesus explains the parable

Section 1: Jesus Teaches the Parable (Mark 4:1-9)

- *“And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. 2) And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,”*
- Preaching once again to a great multitude, Jesus entered into a ship where he taught the entire multitude which remained on the land.
- Mark 4:2—tells us that Jesus taught many things unto the multitude by parables. According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* a parable is “A fable or allegorical relation or representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction; such as the parable of the trees choosing a king, Judges 9.; the parable of the poor man and his lamb. 2 Sam. 12.; the parable of the ten virgins, Matt.25.”
- Matthew 13:1-3
- *“3) Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: 4) And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5) And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: 6) But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7) And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8) And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9) And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*
- Mark 4:3—the sower is sowing seeds.
 - Matthew 4:4

- Mark 4:4—some of the seeds fell by the “way side” where the birds came and ate it.
 - Mark 10:46—“highway side” Some of the sowers seed fell along the road where it was immediately devoured.
- Mark 4:5-6—another group of seeds fell on stony ground where they immediately sprang up but were just a quickly scorched and withered away because they had no root.
- Mark 4:7—a third grouping of seeds fell among thrones was choked out and therefore yielded no fruit at all.
- Mark 4:8—finally some seeds fell on good ground where they yield fruit sprang up and brought forth an increase.
- Mark 4:9—Jesus then abruptly ends the parable and at this point offers no explanation for what it means.

Section 2: The Disciples Question Jesus (Mark 4:10-12)

- ***“10) And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 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.”***
- Mark 4:10—in this verse find Jesus alone or with a much smaller group than the great multitude we saw in verse one. It is important to observe that some time has passed between when Jesus abruptly ended the parable in verse 9 and being questioned about it in verse 10. This means that most of the people who heard the parable were not present when Christ explained its meaning. This fits with why Jesus says he is teaching in parables.
 - Matthew 13:10—the disciples ask Christ point blank why he speaking unto the multitude in parables?
- Mark 4:11—Jesus answers their question by telling them that is given unto them (i.e., the 12 and other close followers) to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. However, on account of those who are without (i.e., Israel’s leadership and the rest of the apostate nation) all things are done in parables.
 - Matthew 13:11-12—address this question very clearly it is not given for those who are without to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.
- Mark 4:12—these things are done in parables so that they who “are without” shall nor perceive, hear, or understand, and ultimately not be converted or have their sins forgiven.

- Matthew 13:13-15—Jesus explains the reason for speaking in parables so that some people would not understand. Once again it deals with the fulfillment of prophecy made to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament.
 - Isaiah 6:9-10—this is speaking about judicial blindness which means that when people harden their hearts toward God and close their eyes to the light, He confirms their action and keeps them in the dark.
 - Romans 11:25-26
 - Matthew 13:16-17—how many generations in Israel would have loved to see the days arrive that these followers of Christ were now living in?
- Did Jesus give the nation ample time to believe before he began speaking in parables? Hadn't they just stooped so low as to accuse him of casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils? In other words, if they were going to believe they would have already.

Section 3: Jesus Explains the Parable (Mark 4:13-20)

- ***“13) And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? 14) The sower soweth the word. 15) And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16) And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17) And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18) And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19) And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20) And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”***
- Mark 4:13—the Parable of the Sower seems to be a gateway parable. In other words, if one fails to understand the basic truths presented in this parable they will not perceive any of them.
- Mark 4:14—the seeds in the parable represent the word of God (Luke 8:11)
- Mark 4:15—the seeds that fell by the way side which the birds ate represent those who have the word taken from them by Satan before it can take root.
 - Matthew 13:19—they hear the word of kingdom but don't understand it and as a result that wicked one (Satan) takes away what was sown in their heart.
 - Luke 8:12
- Mark 4:16-17—these are those who do not remain or abide in the truth but abandon it when persecutions arise for the word's sake.
 - Matthew 13:21-22

- Luke 8:13—these are those who fail to remain in the truth. These are those who fail to endure to the end.
- Mark 4:18-19—these are people who hear the word but care more for riches and things of the world and thereby choke out word and ultimately become unfruitful.
- Mark 4:20—these people hear the word, receive it, and bring forth fruit.
 - Luke 8:15

Conclusion

- While I understand that Christ is speaking to Israel regarding the mysteries of the Kingdom of God if would be remiss if I did not by way of application as the question, what kind of ground are you?
- When things don't go your way where do you turn for support?
- When things are going your way do you forget about spending time with God in his Word?
- We need to be the good ground which hears the word, receives the word, and allows the word to bring forth fruit.
- Galatians 5:16, 22-23—when we let the spirit work in us the fruit will be produced.
- I Thessalonians 2:13
- Unfortunately many believers have allowed God's Word to be choked in their lives because they have not followed God's instruction to rightly divide the Word of Truth. That is what we will be discussing next week.