

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)

- 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 (1014)

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

- Mark 4:3—the sower is sowing seeds.
 - Matthew 13:4 (1014)
- 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.

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

- 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)

- 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 (1014)—the disciples ask Christ point blank why he speaking unto the multitude in parables?

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

- 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 (1014)—address this question very clearly it is not given for those who are without to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

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

- 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 (1014)—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 (718)—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 (1205)
 - Matthew 13:16-17 (1014)—how many generations in Israel would have loved to see the days arrive that these followers of Christ were now living in?

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

- 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)

- 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 (1014)—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 (1083)

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

- 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 (1014)
 - Luke 8:13 (1083)—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 (1083)

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 (1247)—when we let the spirit work in us the fruit will be produced.
- I Thessalonians 2:13 (1268)
- 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.