

Puzzling Parables

Com'parables

Part 4 – September 18, 2016



Are you bothered by the way Jesus speaks? His disciples were often confused and upset by His directions. (Mt 15:12, 16:7; Mk 9:32) And, the religious rulers demanded direct answers. (Jn 10:24)



We're following Jesus' journey from His baptism through His resurrection and into His ascension. He's about two years in now, at His home office in Capernaum, a parking lot size village, crushed by crowds in the tens of thousands. (Mk 3:8; Jn 6:23-24) **We left Him in a boat, off the shore, speaking to this massive mob, and challenging them with His riddle of the Sower, the Seed, and the Soil.**



As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." [Hear what? "What the Spirit says" – as He says seven times in Revelation. (2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22) "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10)] – Luke 8:8b NAS



[As Ezekiel prophesies] Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see [My Word] but do not [choose to seek and] see and ears to hear [My voice] but do not [choose to find and] hear, for they are a rebellious people. – Ezekiel 12:2 NIV



[As Isaiah prophesies] Their eyes are plastered over [with ignorance] so they cannot see, and their minds closed [with arrogance] so they cannot understand [without humbly seeking with all their heart (Jeremiah 29:13-14)]. – Isaiah 44:18b NIV

[As Zechariah prophesies] But they refused to pay attention [to My instruction]; stubbornly they turned their backs [to My Word] and stopped up their ears [to My voice]. – Zechariah 7:11 NIV

Hindsight being 20/20, most believers mistakenly believe that Jesus used parables to make His message simple and clear. *Clearly* the opposite is true.

When he was alone, the Twelve disciples and the others around him came to him and asked him about the parables. asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" ["He didn't say anything to the crowd without using a parable" (Mat 13:34)] His disciples asked him what this parable meant. [But, before answering that] He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. [What secrets? Those concealed in God's Word, (Prov 25:2) and revealed to those who search with all their heart (Jer 29:13)] to those on the outside [Of what? The Kingdom, which is entered through understanding] everything is said in parables [Why? Because, Kingdom understanding must come through humbly seeking, finding, submitting, and receiving. Therefore] Whoever has [Has what? Kingdom knowledge and a

humble heart] will be given more, [because they'll understand what He's expounding on, and receive it] and he will have an abundance [because, no one expounds like Jesus!]. Whoever does not have, [any Kingdom knowledge] even what he has [seen and heard from the Son of God *himself*] will be taken from him. [Because, it won't gel with the few verses he's learned for his own sense of peace and security (rather than seeking His Creator in His Word with all his heart)] – Mat 13:10-12; Mark 4:10-11; Luke 8:9-10a NIV

Are you on the *outside* of Kingdom knowledge? Are you doing what it takes to get inside Jesus' head and heart? "Secrets" is another way of saying, *answers*. *Want answers? Abundance only comes through desire and pursuit and persistence.*

This is why I speak to them in parables: so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, [because they're ever peeping but never passionately pursuing] and ever hearing but never understanding; [receiving it only in disconnected, self-serving, sound bites] In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing [the Word] but never understanding; [what it really means] you will be ever seeing [the signs and symbols] but never perceiving. [How they fit together; because, you refuse to become My children] For this people's heart has become calloused; [to My heart] they hardly hear with their ears, [taking in the bare minimum they believe is required to be blessed] and they have closed their eyes [to the vast majority of My Word, having deemed it *difficult* and *unnecessary*]. Otherwise [if they searched with all their heart (Jer 29:13-14)] they might [NAS: would] see with their eyes, [what I long to show] hear with their ears, [what I long to speak] understand with their hearts [the secrets of the Kingdom I long to reveal] and turn, [from leaning on their *own understanding*, to the Way, the Truth, and the Life] and be forgiven! [For disregarding My Word, which is My love] and I would heal them.' [In so many profound unimaginable ways; but, they don't, so they won't, so I can't] – Mat 13:13-15; Mark 4:12 NIV



This world is blind to God's Word by willful ignorance. **To what percentage of the Bible are you blind and deaf? Why? Jesus is into parables because parables require pursuit.**

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the [knowledge of the secrets of the] kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." [Why?] – Matthew 19:14 NIV

"... anyone who will not receive the [knowledge of the secrets of the] kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." [Why?] – Luke 18:17 NIV

I believe the OT is a children's game of *Match the Comparables ... for ages four and up*. *Know why? God wasn't gonna wait for Jesus to grow up before teaching Him!* And so, "*a little child shall lead them.*" (Is 11:6) I love to picture little Yeshua bar Yosef (Jesus son of Joseph), the *King of Kings* who *emptied himself to become like us*, (Rev 19:16; Phil 2:7) searching, matching, and growing in wisdom and favor with God. (Luke 2:52)

[Then Jesus said to them] **But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.** [That's news to *them!* Notice He doesn't say, "*Blessed are your hearts because they understand.*" Give 'em a couple more years. But, what are they seeing and hearing right then? *Him!*]

For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. [In the Isaiah parable Jesus quotes, Isaiah asks how long the eyes and ears will be closed; and, God responds with a riddle, including: until the *Holy Seed*, having grown, is cut down. (Is 6:11-13) That's why it's so significant, after His resurrection, that Jesus opens their minds to understand everything written about Him in Scripture. (Luke 24:44-45) The curse is broken. The mind of Christ is offered. (1 Cor 2:16) Eyes can see. Ears can hear. And, hearts can understand and turn and be forgiven and healed ... *if they will*] Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? – Mat 13:16-17; Mark 4:13 NIV

Is He referring to Isaiah's Eyes and Ears? Because, they'll never get why Jesus speaks as He does, till they understand that **truth can't heal until it's desired and pursued and received. Spoon-fed head-knowledge is for Pharisees. For the children of God, it's got'a be hard-fought sought-and-found heart-knowledge.**



Jesus might be referring to His Sower parable; because, **His parables are interdependent and use consistent imagery.** We must apply the comparables He explains in The Sower (seed, thorns, birds, etc.), to the parables that follow it, like: *The Weeds and the Wheat; The Growing Seed; and, The Mustard Seed.* **About the only symbol He doesn't define in The Sower is ... the Sower.** But, after five more parables, He adds that, "**The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man**" and, "**the field is the world**". (Mat 13:37)

But, **Jesus' parable glossary isn't limited to the New Testament.** He said, "*How then will you understand any parable.*" (Mark 4:13) **Jesus' parables are not only brilliant in the deceptively simple way they deal with profound truths, but they're constructed of OT comparables, all of which are interdependent and consistent.**

Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable ... "A **great eagle** [*"I (God) carried you on eagles' wings"* (Ex 19:4)] ... took some of the **seed** of the land and **planted it** ... It was planted in **good soil** by many waters, to bring forth **branches, bear fruit**, and become a **majestic vine.**" [*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit"* (John 15:5)] ... Say now [as Jesus did with His disciples] ... "**Do you not know what these things mean?**" – Ezekiel 17:2-12 NKJ

He who has ears to hear, let him hear ... *what I'm quoting!*

"**Give ear** and come to me; **hear me** ... For my thoughts are not your thoughts ... As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth ... so that it yields **seed for the sower** ... **so is** [it comparable to] **my word that goes out from my mouth** ... instead of **briers** the myrtle will grow." – Isaiah 55:1-13 NIV

[Remember the seedling in rocky soil that withers in the sun?] **While it is still green** and not cut down, **yet it withers** before any other plant. **So** [comparable] are the paths of all who forget God ... Whose confidence [NIV: *trust*] is fragile ... **it does not endure. He thrives before the sun ...** [But] **His roots wrap around a rock pile, he grasps a house of stones.** – Job 8:11-17 NAS

[Remember the seed that grew among the thorns?] I went ... past the vineyard of the **man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere ... I applied my heart to what I observed** and **learned a lesson from what I saw** ... – Proverbs 24:30-32 NIV

Jesus combines and condenses so many OT comparables, to convey the Word in simple stories (more fully grasped *post-resurrection*) while revealing ever deepening insights to any ear that'll hear. Here then, is Jesus' parable of the Sower, in His own words, gathered from all three Gospels, and with their symbols crossed out and replaced with Jesus' NT (and a few OT) definitions.

~~A farmer~~ **THE LORD** [**Yēhovah**] **YOUR GOD,** [**'elohiym**] **EVEN THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL** (Is 55:5) went out **FROM HEAVEN** (Is 55:10) **INTO THE WORLD** (Mt 13:38) **AS THE SON OF MAN** (Mt 13:37) to ~~sow his seed~~ **SPREAD HIS WORD FROM HIS OWN MOUTH.** (Is 55:11)

As he was ~~scattering the seed~~ **SPREADING HIS WORD**, some fell ~~along the path~~ **ON THE EARS OF THOSE WHO HEARD THE MESSAGE, ABOUT THE KINGDOM, AND DID NOT UNDERSTAND IT** (Mt 13:19) **AND TRAMPLED ON IT** (Lk 8:5) and **SO AS SOON AS THEY HEARD IT** (Mk 4:15) ~~the birds of the air~~ **THE EVIL ONE,** (Mt 13:19) **SATAN,** (Mk 4:15) **THE DEVIL,** (Lk 8:12) came and ~~ate it up~~ **SNATCHED WHAT WAS SPOKEN INTO THEM,** (Mt 13:19; Mk 4:15) **TAKING AWAY THE WORD FROM THEIR HEARTS, SO THEY MAY NOT BELIEVE AND BE SAVED.** (Lk 8:12)

Some **OF THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM** (Mt 4:23) fell on ~~rocky places,~~ **EARS THAT HEARD THE WORD AND AT ONCE RECEIVED IT WITH JOY** (Mt 13:20; Mk 4:16) ~~where it did not have much soil~~ **BUT SINCE THEY HAVE NO ROOT,** (Lk 8:13) **THEY LAST, THAT IS, BELIEVE,** (Lk 8:13) **FOR A SHORT TIME** (Mk 4:17) It ~~sprang up~~ **WAS BELIEVED AND RECEIVED** (Lk 8:13) quickly, because ~~the soil was~~ **THEY WERE** shallow. But ~~when the sun came up in~~ **THE TIME OF TESTING,** (Lk 8:13) **WHEN TROUBLE OR PERSECUTION CAME, BECAUSE OF GOD'S WORD,** (Mt 13:21; Mk 4:17) ~~the plants were scorched,~~ **THEY DID NOT ENDURE** (Job 8:15) **BUT QUICKLY FELL AWAY,** (Mt 13:21; Mk 4:17) and they ~~withered~~ **FORGOT GOD** (Job 8:13) because ~~they had no moisture.~~ **THEIR HOPE PERISHED** (Job 8:13) because ~~they had no root.~~ **THEIR TRUST WAS FRAGILE** (Job 8:15)

~~Other seed~~ **GOD'S WORD** (Mk 4:19) fell ~~among thorns,~~ **ON THE EARS OF OTHERS WHO WERE OCCUPIED BY LIFE'S WORRIES, RICHES, AND PLEASURES** (Lk 8:14) which ~~grew up~~ **CAME IN** (Mk 4:19) with ~~it~~ **THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD** (Mk 1:14) **AND AS THEY WENT ON THEIR WAY,** (Lk 8:14) **BECAUSE THEY LACK JUDGMENT** (Prov 24:30-31) **THE WORRIES OF THIS LIFE AND THE DECEITFULNESS OF WEALTH** and **THE DESIRES FOR OTHER THINGS** (Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19) choked the ~~plants,~~ **WORD** (Mk 4:19) so ~~that~~ they did not ~~bear grain~~ **MATURE,** (Lk 8:14) **MAKING GOD'S WORD UNFRUITFUL.** (Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19)

Still ~~other seed~~ **THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD,** (Lk 8:1) fell on good soil **EARS, OF A MAN** (Mt 13:23) **WITH A NOBLE AND GOOD HEART,** (Lk 8:15) **WHO HEARD THE WORD, UNDERSTOOD IT,** (Mt 13:23) **ACCEPTED IT,** (Mk 4:20) **AND RETAINED IT** (Lk 8:15) where **BY PERSEVERING,** (Lk 8:15) ~~it~~ **GOD'S WORD** (Lk 8:11) came up, grew and ~~produced a crop,~~ **BORE FRUIT** (Ezek 17:8) multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times, more than was ~~sown~~ **FIRST RECEIVED IN HIS HEART.** (Mt 13:19-20)

Are you bothered by the way Jesus speaks?

Do you sometimes wish He'd just be clear and plain and simple? Come on, *that's* how those on the *outside* think. **It's time to come inside God's Word and Jesus' head and heart.**