

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

LESSON 1

Parable of the Soils (Matthew 13:1-8, 19-23)

Context

1. Read Matthew 12:22-32. Jesus was doing many miracles. How did the religious leaders (Pharisees) interpret the amazing things Jesus was saying and doing? What conclusions were they willing to draw concerning His miracles and His teaching? According to Jesus in Matthew 12:30-32, is this an insignificant decision?

2. Because of the rejection of the religious leaders, Jesus explained a change in God's program. The Messiah came to Israel as a nation but because of its rejection, He now offers Himself to individuals. Read Matthew 12:46-50. To illustrate this new relationship, who does He call His brother, sister, and mother?

Problem/Purpose of telling the Parable

3. In light of the rejection of the religious leaders, the disciples are wondering why Jesus is being rejected when He has demonstrated who He is by His authority, in His words, and by His miracles. Is the cause of this rejection the fault of the sower, the seed, or the soils in the parable of Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23? Hint: you have the same sower and the same seed in all four groups of people.

Details of the Parable

4. What are the four different soils Jesus names in Matthew 13:4-8? What do these soils represent (v. 19-23)? Who is the sower (13:37), and what is the seed (v. 19)?

5. How does Jesus describe the first soil (v. 4, 19)? What kind of cultivation was needed for them to understand (Ps. 37:3-6)? Write down all the verbs in this passage of Psalms.

6. How does Jesus describe the person represented as rocky soil in Matthew 13:5, 20-21? Why does this person experience affliction and persecution? What is his response to the affliction or persecution? Why does the world persecute the one who delights in God's truth (John 3:19-21)?
7. How does Jesus describe the thorny soil of v. 7, 22? What does Mark add to this description in Mark 4:19? What does Luke add in Luke 8:14? How does this soil illustrate Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:24? The first two soils describe external opposition to the Word of God. This soil describes an internal opposition. How important is it to focus your attention, your desires, and guard your heart? (Romans 6:13, 12:1-2; Philippians 4:6-7, John 14:1, 27) What does I Timothy 6:10 say is a root problem? What advice is given in I Timothy 6:11?
8. In Matthew 13:8 what happens when the seed (the Word of God) fell on the good soil? What is the "crop" (v. 23)? According to John 15:5, how do you bear fruit? From this parable, John 15:5, Romans 8:11, Hebrews 11:6, Galatians 5:16, 22-25 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17, what is the formula for bearing fruit? Do you bear fruit in order to gain Christ or do you bear fruit because you have Christ and are abiding in Him?
9. Was the difference in these results in the seed or in the soil on which the seed fell? The fact that men were rejecting Christ's message reflected on their hardness of heart. What does the Bible say about man's natural "heart" condition? Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 1:21, 2:5
10. The focus of this parable is people's response to the Word of God. What specifically is the message from God to which all men must respond? John 1:12, 5:24; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:21-26; Titus 3:5-7