

The Genesis Parable – Part 1 – The Garden of Eden

Hi everyone and welcome to “Grain of Wheat Publishing” and “Studies in Scripture.” My name is Jack Marshall and thank you for joining me today.

This is Part One of my series, “The Genesis Parable,” where we will begin to take an in-depth look at the story of Adam and Eve and the “Garden of Eden.”

Let’s get started.

As our title suggests, the story of the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve *is a parable*. This is confirmed by the fact that we find several things about this story that cannot be taken literally. For example, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. The appearance of the serpent is also parabolic, so too the Garden of Eden itself. None of these can be found anywhere on this planet, nor should we expect to find them. They are symbolisms, pointing to spiritual understandings.

At first glance, the Genesis parable can be somewhat confusing, however, once we acknowledge *that it is a parable*, we can then consider this story in symbolic form to arrive at an understanding of what has been recorded. Let’s begin with Genesis, Chapter Two, verses four through eight.

These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a **man** to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed **man** of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and **man** became a living soul. **And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.**

In these passages, the word “man” is used three times. This is the transliteration “Adam,” the word that most everyone is familiar with. The Strong’s Concordance defines this word as, “*Ruddy*, i.e. a *human being* (an individual or the species, *mankind*, etc.).” The root of this word is “Adem,” meaning, “To *show blood* (in the face), i.e. *flush* or turn rosy.”

The first use of the word “Adam” is found in Genesis One twenty-six, where we read, “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion.’” Despite what tradition has led us to think, this word is again “Adam” but is used in a collective sense, indicating the creation of *the first generation of humankind*. Note the reference to “let THEM have dominion,” clearly suggesting MORE THAN ONE. Beloved, this is often our first mistake in understanding our Genesis parable. Though Adam and Eve are presented as individuals in this story, they are representative of the entire human race whose beginning is recorded in the first few chapters of Genesis. Once we understand this, it becomes much easier to make sense of it.

It is not until we reach Genesis Two nineteen that we find the word “Adam” used in what appears to be a singular and more personal sense, but again, here lies the problem. We should not take it this way, for when we read that God brought “every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them,” we should realize that man, i.e. humankind, has been naming creation since its beginning, AND IS STILL DOING SO TODAY when he discovers new species. So this injunction by the Lord in the beginning is ONGOING, continuing to be fulfilled even up to this present time.

So what does all of this mean to you and me? Simply this. When we view the story of Adam and Eve, we are considering our own beginning, which is the SAME for every person on this planet, with no exceptions. As we

continue in this series, we will see how this is confirmed by the symbolisms found in our parable. Now, let's return to a portion of our passages from Genesis Two.

And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. **And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.**

The first thing to notice in these passages is this—immediately following the creation of humankind, we read, “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there HE PUT THE MAN WHOM HE HAD FORMED.” So first, God formed us, then He “planted a garden,” then He placed “man,” or ALL HUMANKIND, within this “garden.”

As we've already considered, this is not literal. So this being the case, what does the “Garden of Eden” signify? The apostle Paul tells us in Galatians, Chapter Six, verses seven through ten.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for **whatever a man sows, that he will also reap**. For he who **sows** to his flesh will of the flesh **reap** corruption, but he who **sows** to the Spirit will of the Spirit **reap** everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season **we shall reap** if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Here we have it, brothers and sisters, the simplest yet most profound understanding that we can take from the Bible, which is the principle of “sowing and reaping” or “seedtime and harvest.” This is what the symbolism of the “Garden of Eden” presents to us at the beginning of our creation. After all, what is the purpose of a garden if not for the planting of seed and the eventual harvest of what has been planted? In keeping with the fact that this is true of all of us, note how Paul states, “Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” Our word “man” here is also used in a collective and all-inclusive sense, which agrees with our statement, “And there he put the man whom he had formed.”

I can say with all confidence that the principle of sowing and reaping is the most precious understanding that I have ever received in all of my years of study. Why do I say this? Because, as we will discover later in this series, it defines the principle of resurrection, which is the core essence and understanding on which the Bible is written. To confirm our stance so far, let's take a moment to consider one of the most important parables that Jesus taught. Not surprisingly, it's the Parable of the Sower, found in Matthew, Chapter Thirteen, Mark, Chapter Four, and Luke, Chapter Eight. We'll read from Matthew, Chapter Thirteen.

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Let's go now to Mark, Chapter Four, and some very important statements which Jesus made to His disciples after teaching this parable.

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. 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**, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven." And he said to them, "**Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?**"

As you might realize, the importance of this parable is contained in the Lord's questions to His disciples. "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand ALL the parables?" Could this mean that this parable is foundational? Very much so, for as we have learned, God "planted a garden Eastward in Eden" immediately following our creation, and it was then that He placed all of us within the construct of this principle. Could we not say then that the Parable of the Sower is the understanding of the "Garden of Eden"? I believe we could. Let's go to Luke, Chapter Eight, where we will find confirmation.

"Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.** Those by the **wayside** are the ones who hear; then the devil comes **and takes away the word out of their hearts**, lest they should believe and be saved.

Here we see that Jesus makes it clear. "The seed is the Word of God" and the "soil" or "ground" in which it is sown represents our "hearts." This immediately shows that in regard to His kingdom, we must think INWARD, not OUTWARD. Jesus also confirms this in Luke, Chapter Seventeen.

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**"

Here we are, beloved. The kingdom of God is within us; His principle of sowing and reaping established from the beginning of our creation in order to advance His will and purpose in both the physical and spiritual realms of our existence. What did Jesus say? "The seed IS the Word of God." He DID NOT say that the Word is LIKE a seed, but rather, "IS" the seed. And so John wrote, "In the beginning," that is in Genesis, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word WAS God. He," that is the Word, "was in the beginning with God. ALL THINGS were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Isn't it true that a seed contains the necessary life within in order to produce after its kind? For confirmation, see Genesis One, verses nine through thirteen. No doubt about it my friends, since the beginning of creation, God's Word or "seed" has been "living" and "active," bringing all things, both visible and invisible into existence and advancing His will and purpose in the earth by His divine principle of sowing and reaping. See Hebrews Four and twelve and Colossians One sixteen. Now, let's go to Matthew's record in Matthew Thirteen where Jesus begins to explain this parable to His disciples.

"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, **and does not understand it,** then the **wicked one** comes **and snatches away what was sown in his heart.** This is he who received seed by the **wayside.**

When we take time to consider the teaching of the Parable of the Sower, we will find that it agrees perfectly with our parable in Genesis. In agreement with Matthew Thirteen, once Adam was given the commandment or Word from God to not eat of the tree of knowledge in Genesis Two sixteen and seventeen, we then see the serpent or "wicked one" appear in Genesis Three in order to tempt Eve. Why Eve and not Adam? Because Eve, in keeping with the Parable of the Sower, represents the "heart" of Adam, the place of Adam's *affection*. For confirmation, see Genesis Sixteen five, Deuteronomy Thirteen six, and Deuteronomy Twenty-eight fifty-four. This particular action, if you will, agrees with the first condition which Jesus described in the Parable of the Sower, the "wayside" where the seed fell and "the birds came and devoured them." As Jesus explains, this signifies the fact that "the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart." That being said, we find more depth as to what the Garden of Eden represents. What did Jesus say about the "wayside"? It's anyone who "hears the Word of the kingdom, AND DOES NOT UNDERSTAND IT." So Adam "heard" the Word, but did not "understand" it. This shows that the "wayside" speaks of you and me when we first come into this world and have no understanding whatsoever about the kingdom of God and Christ. So the Garden of Eden not only typifies the divine principle of sowing and reaping, but also the REVELATION and KNOWLEDGE of its intent and purpose in our lives and in this world into which we are born. Now, let's go to the second condition which Jesus described in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew Thirteen, verses twenty and twenty-one.

But he who received the seed on **stony places**, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while**. For when **tribulation** or **persecution** arises because of the word, immediately he **stumbles**.

In the beginning of this presentation, I made it a point to clarify that all humankind abides under the principle of sowing and reaping. As we just learned, the truth of this is seen in the Lord's teaching about the "wayside," but I believe it is also clarified by the second condition in our parable about the "seed" which was received on "stony places." We have already found that the "wayside" agrees with our story of Adam and Eve, however, I am inclined to go with the idea that both the "wayside" AND "stony places" apply in this case. The reason for this is our phrase, "He stumbles." The King James renders this word as "offended," while the English Standard Version and New International Version render it as "falls away." In agreement with this, didn't Adam and Eve "fall away" and, as a result, were "sent out" from the Garden of Eden? See Genesis Three, verses twenty-three and twenty-four. When we consider this *offense* or *falling away* in light of the Parable of the Sower, we gain a better understanding of what is meant by the following.

This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, **nor do they understand**. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: " 'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. **For this people's heart has grown dull**, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears **and understand with their heart and turn**, and I would heal them.' "

I don't believe anyone would disagree with me that those whom Jesus spoke about in these passages would consist of the "wayside" and the "stony places." And again, in regard to "stony places," Jesus used the word "offended." The Strong's Concordance defines this as, "To *entrap*, i.e. *trip* up, figurative *stumble* or *entice* to sin." Google defines "offended" as, "Resentful or annoyed, typically as a result of a PERCEIVED INSULT." Ah, here we go, a "perceived insult." In other words, we get offended due to our own PERCEPTION. And how does Google define "perception"? "A way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression." So here we find the meaning behind "stony places." They are those perceptions within that stand in the way of receiving the words of Christ. Like rocks strewn about in a garden that prevents the seed from taking a deep hold in the earth, our current perceptions within do likewise. No wonder Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Now, in light of what we have considered, who is the "self"? Would it not be the "mental impressions" which we have carried around our entire lives, consisting of the "labels" and "concepts" that were instilled in us by others? Would it not embody all the aspects of our own self-awareness which then manifests as our self-righteousness, self-importance, self-entitlement, and self-indulgence? Think about it! Why are so many in our society constantly offended, rising up against each other over their perceived insults? Is it not because we place so much importance on the labels that define the "identity" we have come to embrace?

So, think about this in light of our "stony places." Isn't it true that in order to produce a good garden that we must remove all the rocks from the ground that might hinder the growth of the seed? Isn't it also true that a well-groomed garden will have none or almost no rocks at all? So in light of denying ourselves, might this suggest that in light of God's Word we are better off to let these "labels" and "concepts" go from our heart in order to receive and walk in the truth of His Word?

As an example of what I mean, consider the definition of prejudice, of which the most common factor is skin color. Google defines "prejudice" as, "Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience." Would this agree with our idea of "offended," of being "resentful" based on a "perceived insult"? You see, my friends, all of this consists of what lies within our own hearts and minds and "prejudice" if you will, is not only found within the parameters of skin color, but in every "preconceived opinion" that comes with the "label" we've chosen to embrace.

As I close this study today, I would like to challenge you to reexamine the labels that you hold dear in your life in light of the Word of God and take time to think about their importance in your own heart and mind. Are they really that important, or, as the Parable of the Sower suggests, are they placing stumbling blocks in our lives that prevent us from experiencing the love of God that is found in Christ our Lord?

That's it for today's study, my friends. Please be sure to join me for my next study on the Genesis parable because we have a lot of ground to cover. I sincerely hope you've been enlightened by this presentation and please feel free to leave your comments and questions below. If you like what you hear, I would encourage you to subscribe to my channel. Be sure to also visit my Facebook page at Grain of Wheat Publishing or my website at www.grainofwheatpublishing.org where you will find all of my studies available for free. Thank you so much for joining me today and may God bless you in your walk with Christ.