

Truth and the Word

Self-Evident Truths

Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (John 14:6 NASB)

This is a powerful statement made by Jesus. He is the way, the only way to the Father. He is the life, the eternal life that He give to us. And He is the truth, the unchanging truth. The word translated as "truth" has as its root the meaning of "reality". Jesus is the truth, reality, summed up in Himself. Only in Him do we find what is truly real.

In the natural we live as if this world is the only thing that is real when in fact it is passing away. A new heaven and a new earth are coming. That is where we will dwell in the future.

We have difficulty understanding that spiritual reality trumps physical reality. We live with wrong priorities because of it. We assume that we have to change physical reality to improve man's condition. There is nothing wrong with that as long as we are not imposing a lesser standard of truth.

From the natural perspective the Declaration of independence of the United States of America begins with some powerful words:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . .”

The self-evident truths in the Declaration are these, [1] all men are created equal; [2] all men have been given inalienable, that is, unrevocable, rights by their Creator. Three of these rights are defined as, [1] life; [2] liberty; and [3] the pursuit of happiness. These rights are secured or realized through governments, which derive their power from the consent of those who are governed.

While these truths may be self-evident, in practice they are not absolutes but instead are relative. For example, to secure liberty for some may require the loss of life for others. Pursuing happiness by some may interfere with achievement of happiness by others. To function properly, democracies have to balance the various 'inalienable' rights of the governed. That works as long as most of the governed are willing to sacrifice some aspects of 'their rights' for the benefit of others. On a long term basis, it is impossible for the Adamic nature in us to do this. Eventually, we begin to think that 'my rights' outweigh 'your rights' and in a democracy 'special interest' groups come together to secure 'their rights' at the expense of the others that are being governed.

Absolute Truths

God has established absolutes, which are true at all times, in all places, in all circumstances and among all beings. He has personified truth for us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Truth and the foundation of all reality.

DEFINITION OF ABSOLUTE

1. Complete in itself without qualification or exception
2. Having and exercising complete power and authority without need for negotiation
3. Free from mixture or extraneous elements
4. Without limitation or affected by any condition
5. Free from all outside restraints
6. Standing alone without help or restrictions.

In light of this, God has established Jesus as Absolute Ruler and Absolute King with absolute power and absolute authority to set an absolute standard for an absolute Government for eternity as shown by the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever. ([Hebrews 13:8 NASB](#))

The King is unchangeable in character and in function. His rule is unchangeable in administration; therefore, making His government secure and unshakable.

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."
This *expression*, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. ([Hebrews 12:26-29 NASB](#))

We are receiving a kingdom, a government, which is secured by the King. It cannot be shaken. It stands as an absolute. Everything that is not secured by the King will be shaken out so that only the Kingdom and the things of the King remain.

Jesus Christ is God's unchanging person, God's reigning King, and the Kingdom is God's unshakable and immovable government and divine order. These two absolutes are established by God to provide an absolute anchor to which we may fix our hope and our existence for now and in eternity. This is the focus of our hope. If we lose sight of these two absolutes and focus upon any other aspect of life, our life and ministry become relative and, therefore, irrelevant as far as any ability to accomplish God's purpose is concerned.

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. ([Isaiah 9:6-7 NASB](#))

So, spiritually we hold these truths to be self-evident; [1] God has appointed His absolute King; [2] the Government is upon His shoulders and absolutely encompasses all of creation. He has provided by grace through faith, [1] life, [2] liberty, [3] peace, [4] justice and [5] righteousness for all as a benefit of submission to His Government.

Unlike our American government where the Declaration of Independence says that governmental power is derived from the consent of the governed, the Kingdom of God receives governmental authority from its King who has received all authority from His Father, our God. The governed are governed with or without their consent because there is coming a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is lord. The fact is that every person, everywhere, in all ages “stand under” the government of God and are subject to His King. Some “stand under” by obedience and some “stand under” by disobedience but all “stand under”—even those who are ignorant or unaware of the laws of the Kingdom of God, which are always at work because Kingdom Law is built into all of creation. As an absolute, we cannot break the sovereign laws of the Kingdom but *we can break ourselves upon them*.

Applied Absolutes

To meet all human need both now and for eternity, both the Unchanging King and the Unshakable Kingdom are essential. To understand this we need to have some insight into Kingdom government and how it works in eternity and how that applies to us now.

First, we should realize that to receive the benefits of the Kingdom we have to do the will of the Father as Jesus said:

Matthew 7:21 NKJV "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

We have made this rather abstract and subjective. The “will of the Father” becomes whatever I want to do in the name of the Lord. As long as I subjectively decide the will of the Father, I am still operating under self-government rather than the Government of the King.

So, we see that first I must come to grips with God's government in terms of *who I am* before considering *what I do*. Who I am is a subject of the King. All self-government must die and Jesus must, in practice, become King over all that I am.

After submitting who I am to the Lord, I can then address what I do. Jesus made it clear in Matthew chapters five, six, and seven that His government encompasses our relationship with God and with each other and it adjusts our character, our attitudes, our thoughts, our actions, our disposition, every aspect of our life. This means that the will of the Father involves more than doing some 'ministry' or obedience in outward work. In other words, it must become subjectively real in us before we can express its objective nature. Doing the will of the Father involves obedience to both the King and His government, which is divine order. Both of these require subjective and objective obedience.

Man has relevance only in relationship with the King and His Kingdom. Outside of that realm of the absolutes we may easily fall short of God's eternal purpose. Everything—wealth, power, authority, prayer—must be held in proper perspective to the Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person. When man and his desires, even ministry desires, become the center and focus of any activity, it is outside the absolutes and becomes a subjective, relative work without Kingdom value.

When I refer to these two absolutes I don't mean to separate the King and the Kingdom as two separate things. Jesus Christ has been established as the absolute and supreme authority over all the universe. He has been exalted above every living thing. He has been given total dominion—everything has been placed under His feet. He is the Head of the church which is His body. The Kingdom is that absolute and divine order that is presently functioning in heaven. When it functions on earth in that same measure we can say "the Kingdom has come".

If the Kingdom was just a mechanical system of government with various laws that must be obeyed, our relationship with the Kingdom would depend upon our individual ability to understand the laws and obey them. This would be similar to the laws under the Old Covenant. However, the "laws" under the New Covenant are written upon our minds and our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

The Old Covenant had to do with outward actions only. The New Covenant has to do with spirit and life. It is manifested through the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The New Covenant is concerned with an inner life that has an outward revelation. Life comes first, good works come second.

This arrangement places the operation of the laws within the life of the Kingdom citizen as internal as opposed to external like the Old Covenant laws. Our connection to these laws is only through a life union with the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit. Trying to access the Kingdom except through the Lord Jesus Christ is impossible and an absolute waste of time.

Jesus Christ and the eternal Kingdom are one—it is The King and His Kingdom. The commandment of one is the commandment of the other. We must take these commandments seriously or we may find ourselves rejecting the Kingdom. The tendency of the church is to hear the commandments, determine we can't do them and then forget it. We think, if I can't do it then I am not responsible—not held accountable. But the very fact that the Kingdom gives commandments makes us responsible and accountable. Whether we can do it or not is irrelevant, because the provision and ability or power is in the Kingdom and the supply of the King.

Purpose

What's the point of existence? Apart from understanding something of God's purpose there seems to be no adequate explanation for our existence. No philosophy offers a satisfying explanation for the meaning of life. Only the Word of God offers rational understanding of the purpose of our years spent on this earth. Much, if not most, of the preaching and teaching in the church only sees the goal as going to heaven someday. It seems that man was created to fall so that God could redeem man and take him to heaven. It seems quite logical that God, who is the Creator of all things, must have a greater purpose in creation than just to save us from hell.

All this is a great mystery that is far beyond natural man solving by scientific research and empirical evidence. The mystery must be solved by revelation that is held within the scripture but is taught to us by God. Many evangelicals who read the scriptures believe that the whole Bible is just a book of salvation. They say it reveals that God delivers man from hell in order to fellowship with man in heaven. Of course, it should be clear that if that was the total purpose of God, He could have locked up or destroyed the devil so man would not have fallen in the first place. Or God could have created man in heaven instead of upon earth.

The whole experience on earth must have more purpose than we have given it. Our existence here is a time of preparation for eternity or all of the trials, sufferings, persecutions and tribulations are without reason and produce no eternal benefit.

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NASB)

As we live within the requirements of the King and the Kingdom today, we are being prepared to fit into our place in the Eternal Kingdom. If the Kingdom were only a place in the future where we go when we die, why would the Lord place so much emphasis on how we live here? After all, if God so desired, we could be changed into His likeness in a moment, in the blinking of an eye; however, He has chosen to change us through the instruments of His Spirit and trials and sufferings.

The Kingdom is both a fixed order in heaven and an unfolding order here on earth. It is historical, contemporary, and future. It is normal and easy to focus upon one aspect of the Kingdom and ignore the other aspects. Since the Kingdom really is both now and future, if we focus on the future then we may miss the current fulfillment of the Kingdom in our lives. For centuries this has been the emphasis—the Kingdom someday. However, the Kingdom is the stability of the universe in every generation for those who submit to its government. The Kingdom is the purpose of our existence both now and in Eternity and it is preparing us to fulfill our destiny.

Entering the Kingdom

Some theological questions arise about entering the Kingdom of God. Mostly the church has taught if you are born again you are a citizen of the Kingdom. The reason that is given is the church and the Kingdom are the same thing. If that is true then the scriptures concerning the Kingdom are confusing when compared with those dealing with the Church. Can we logically say "repent for the church is at hand" or the church is "the pearl of great price", or "like a treasure hidden in a field"?

The church is not the Kingdom. The kingdom has always existed while the church is seen through about 2000 years of history. The church is significant only as far as it obeys the laws of the Kingdom. Disobeying the King or the Kingdom disenfranchises the church just as Jesus said to the Church at Ephesus in Revelation.

'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent. (Revelation 2:5 NASB)

As I understand it, to remove their lampstand means that corporately they will no longer be "church". The individual believers are still believers but their corporate functions will be removed. They have been corporately disenfranchised from the Kingdom.

To manifest the Kingdom we must stand in the Kingdom and have the Kingdom in us. When the kingdom is seen in us visibly, then the freedom, the provision and the power of the kingdom can be demonstrated. The weakness of the church is in her lack of the Kingdom.

In fact the church, without the Kingdom, is irrelevant. The reason is simple. If the church is not born again, not born of the water and born of the spirit and if the church is not doing the will of God, it is irrelevant.

The church is relative while the Kingdom is absolute. The church is relevant only so far as it is related to the Kingdom. The church has power and position only as it receives from the Kingdom. The church has nothing of its own and can do nothing on its own, except as it is empowered by the Lord. Jesus said "Without me you can do nothing." Nothing means nothing.

The church that ignores the commandment of Jesus or the laws of the Kingdom of God will be insignificant and weightless. The church without the Kingdom is as lifeless as the body without the head.

That lack is seen in the lack of the fruit of the Kingdom (not to be confused with the fruit of the Spirit).

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. (Matthew 21:43 NASB)

The kingdom is given on the basis of fruit—not on the basis of denomination, race, nationality, or intellectual ability. It is given only on the basis of fruit, which is the only fair way. Any other way would eliminate some person or group. But now any person or group, who can produce the fruit of the Kingdom, is welcome to the Kingdom. That doesn't discriminate against anybody. No one will be able to complain they weren't given the Kingdom or offered the Kingdom.

God has made it so all who really want the Kingdom can participate. However, it is not automatic as some teach. It will cost you everything even your self-life and self-government. Until we examine the 150 or so New Testament Scriptures that speak of the Kingdom, we will probably be guilty of underestimating the cost of entering the Kingdom.

Many equate forgiveness of sins with entering the Kingdom. Even a quick study of the Kingdom scriptures will reveal that there is more to it than just forgiveness. The question then is what is the cost and what are the requirements to enter the Kingdom of God? God has kept that hidden; however, from the parables it is clear that the cost is all you have.

The Kingdom is like a treasure which a man found and hid in a field and went and sold all that he had to buy that field. If you can't buy the field you will not have the treasure.

These are still mysteries of the Kingdom of God that have not been revealed. We must stand confident in faith that since Jesus told us to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to the whole world, there has to be a message that can be preached to the whole world. The message must be more than "there is going to be a Kingdom someday". It is obvious, many who think they will enter the Kingdom, someday, will not. The reason is because the Kingdom must take root in us today and bring forth Kingdom fruit.

The Kingdom of God requires that we be productive, that something is produced that is of value to the Lord. Read the parables of the talents and the minas. The initial investment is provided by the Lord, but you have to use the initial investment to produce an increase. It can't be squirreled away or hidden to be produced again at the time of accounting.

No Kingdom fruit, no Kingdom. It is not complicated.

We hold these truths to be self-evident—there is an absolute King and an absolute Kingdom. Everything else is derived from these self-evident truths.

Compressed Truth

Anyone who has used a computer for any length of time understands the idea of compressed files, sometimes called “zipped” files. These are files that have been compressed by having extraneous space removed and repetitive data linked rather than repeated. This is done to save disk space by reducing the size of the file that is stored. A compressed file can no longer be read by the software that created it unless the compressed file is first un-compressed or “unzipped”.

The Lord has done something similar to this with His presentation of Truth to us. Many aspects of truth have been compressed and cannot be read, that is, understood, until the Holy Spirit brings revelation by de-compressing the truth so that we can understand. Compressed truth is hidden truth

which can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Parables

Jesus spoke many things very plainly to the people. At other times, He only spoke to them in parables.

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. (Matthew 13:34 NASB)

Parables are a form of compressed truth. They cannot be fully understood unless the Holy Spirit decompresses the truth, that is, expands the fullness of the truth so that all aspects of it can come into our understanding. Parables are a way of hiding truth from those who do not have the proper “decompressing software”, that is, from those who do not have the Holy Spirit to open the Truth and a renewed mind to understand it.

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. (Matthew 13:10-11 NASB)

From this we see that Jesus purposely used parables so that the only ones who would understand would be the ones who “had been granted” access.

"Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (Matthew 13:13 NASB)

While people could see and hear what was said, they did not understand because the parables were compressed truth that had to be decompressed by the Holy Spirit in order to be understood. The natural mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit for they are spiritually discerned.

The English word “parable” is simply a transliterated form of the Greek word *parabole*, a compound word which means “to cast alongside.” By this definition, a parable is a truth placed alongside of previously existing revealed truth with the additional truth given to help explain the previously revealed truth.

This is why these parables could be understood by the disciples but would be meaningless to others. The matter hinged on whether or not the previously revealed truths had been received.

Jesus began to speak with parables when He began to speak of the things of the Kingdom of God. Understanding the Kingdom is given to the disciples of the Lord but not to the general public. The multitudes only heard the beginning word of the Kingdom—the word of repentance. So, one of the areas of compressed truth is in “Kingdom understanding”, which requires the Holy Spirit to reveal it.

The parables “cast alongside” each other by building on or adding to the revealed truth of the previous ones. In other words, one parable can take an “uncompressed” truth from a previous parable and, when it is opened by the Holy Spirit, provide further truth that adds additional understanding.

An example of this is in Matthew chapter 13. Verse one tells us that Jesus left the house and went down by the sea. There He spoke to the crowds and told four parables of the Kingdom of God. Then, verse 36 tells us that Jesus sent the crowds away and went back into the house. There He explained the parable of the wheat and tares to the disciples and told them three more Kingdom parables.

So, in this we see two groups of parables concerning the Kingdom of God. The first group told by the sea is to the crowds and relate to one another with general understanding so that each parable provides

additional truth to the previous. The second group is told in the house and only to the disciples, so we would expect them to be related with deeper understanding of the Kingdom for the disciples than the previous group. Later, Jesus told His disciples another group of Kingdom parables in Matthew chapter 25, which all related to His return and events at the end of the age. The “compressed truth” in each of these groups of parables can only be understood as the Holy Spirit begins to decompress and relate them to one another.

Hidden Truth

Later, Jesus even told His closest disciples that He had things to say to them, truth to be revealed, but they were not ready—they couldn't handle the truth at that time. But, He was making provision for them to understand later when the Spirit of Truth would come and guide them into understanding.

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. (John 16:12-14 NASB)

Paul said similar things when he was teaching the Corinthians. From what he said, it is obvious that their problem with understanding was immaturity in spiritual things.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NASB)

They could not receive more truth because they still operated in a fleshly manner, being ruled by the desires and ambitions of the flesh.

The writer of Hebrews had much more to say but found it difficult to explain spiritual things to them because of their spiritual condition. Apparently, their spiritual understanding had deteriorated to the point that only basic truth was understood. They had become “dull of hearing” which is what Jesus had said, “hearing they don't hear”.

Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. (Hebrews 5:11 NASB)

They had become dull of hearing because they were not progressing toward maturity but instead had actually “backslid” to an immature level.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (Hebrews 5:12 NASB)

Maybe this doesn't bother anyone else, but it bothers me. I want to continue to grow, to mature, to come to full understanding of the things of the Lord. I want to put off anything that hinders the Holy Spirit from bringing revelation. I don't want to continually revert to milk; I want solid food.

Paul's Prayer

Paul told the Ephesians that he gave thanks for them and mentioned them in his prayers. This is what

he included as things that he prayed for them.

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, (Ephesians 1:17-20 NASB)

He prayed that they would receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Everything begins with revelation knowledge of Jesus—He is Truth. The spirit of wisdom and revelation opens the eyes of the heart and enlightens our understanding with the result that we know these three things:

1. what is the hope of His calling;
2. what are the riches of His inheritance in us;
3. what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us.

These are three areas of compressed truth. It takes the Holy Spirit and His revelation in us to begin to comprehend the Lord's intention and provision in these three areas. God has empowered the Spirit for revelation in these areas with the same working of strength and power that He used to raise Jesus from the dead and seat Him at His right hand in the heavenlies. So, the moment that we reach a spiritually mature place where we are able to “handle the truth”, that is, able to bear it now, the Holy Spirit is ready to reveal it with the fullness of the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. The moment that we are able, the power of revelation is available to “unzip”, decompress, truth for us.

Hindrances

Since the bulk of “Kingdom truth” is compressed into parables, we could expect the first Kingdom parable to speak to the issue of things that would hinder us from understanding. Jesus explained the first parable for us and even told us that it is basic to understanding the rest.

And He *said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables? (Mark 4:13 NASB)

We call this first parable “the parable of the sower” but, actually, it should be called “the parable of the soils” because that is the key element for the seed and the fruit. The “soils” are the hearts of those who hear the word of the Kingdom, which is compared to a seed that is to grow and produce fruit.

The hindrances to understanding are given in Jesus' explanation:

1. **Ignorance.** The hard ground of the roadside cannot receive the word of the Kingdom. The Devil takes it away before it can sprout.
"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. (Matthew 13:19 NASB)
2. **Shallowness.** Rocky soil is not deep enough to sustain long term growth. The seed cannot come to a place of productivity.
"The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and

immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. (Matthew 13:20-21 NASB)

3. **Distractions.** Soil that is full of thorn bushes cannot produce fruit from the Kingdom seed because the thorns choke out the things of the Kingdom. Worldly distractions hinder the growth of the seed in us.

"And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22 NASB)

Remember that Jesus is speaking of the “word of the Kingdom” in this parable, not the word of salvation. Jesus told Nicodemus that you must be born again to see the Kingdom. So, the word of the Kingdom is for the *believer* not the unbeliever. It is the word of the Kingdom that is to produce fruit in our lives. Salvation is just the beginning point.

Fruit is hindered or even prevented by these three things: ignorance, shallowness, and worldly distractions. The hearts that contain these things will not be productive for the Kingdom of God.

We need to ask the Lord to plow our hearts (soil); break up the “hard pan” of the shallow ground and “bush hog” the thorns so that our hearts can receive the seed and grow the expected crop.

If we don't do this, we may be shocked at the judgment seat of Christ. We may find ourselves called an “unprofitable servant” by the Lord.

The Word of the Kingdom

Jesus spoke a series of parables in Matthew chapter 13 that we call the “Kingdom parables” because they all speak of the Kingdom of God. Jesus told his disciples that He was doing this so that only they (the disciples) would understand because to know these things about the Kingdom is not given to the general public or even the religious people.

The first parable is the one that we call the “parable of the sower” even though the more descriptive term might be the “parable of the soils”. Jesus spoke the Kingdom parables to the multitudes, which included the disciples. The explanation of the parable of the sower was spoken to the disciples but within the hearing of the crowd. However, the rest of the Kingdom parables were explained only to the disciples in the house after Jesus had sent the multitudes away (Matt. 13:36).

When His disciples asked Him to explain the parable of the sower, He told them that if they couldn't understand this one, how would they understand the rest (Mark 4:13). So, we have in this parable a foundation that is crucial to understanding the other parables. If your understanding is incorrect about this one, it will cause your understanding to be incorrect about the rest of the Kingdom parables.

Jesus explains the parable to us so that we have no excuse for not understanding. This is what He says:

"Hear then the parable of the sower. "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only*

temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." (Matthew 13:18-23 NASB)

Three Crucial Elements

The explanation of Jesus reveals three crucial elements to the parable of the sower.

1. The seed;
2. The soil;
3. The hindrances of the growing conditions.

These three elements are the key to understanding the parable and its purpose.

The Seed. The other gospels call the seed “the word of God”; however, Matthew makes it clear that the seed is not just generally the word of God, but the *specific* word of the Kingdom. Many have taught that this is the word of God concerning salvation and interpreted this parable and the rest based on that assumption. But, Jesus said it was the word of the Kingdom, which is for those who already believe (“...unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3) The word of the Kingdom deals with the King, His requirements of His citizens, and the purposes of the Father.

The soil. There are four types of soil listed and the hearts of all people fall into one of these types. They are (1) hard, rocky ground; (2) shallow soil on top of rocky, hardpan ground; (3) wild, uncultivated ground with weeds; and (4) rich, prepared ground, fully cultivated.

The hindrances. There are several hindrances mentioned that prevent the seed from reaching maturity and producing fruit. The goal of planting any seed is that it would grow and produce fruit. It is not any different with the seed of the word of the Kingdom.

Enemies of the Word of the Kingdom

The parable brings forth a number of enemies of the word of the Kingdom. The first, of course, is the evil one, the devil. He snatches the word away so that it will not be understood. The harder the heart, the easier it is for the enemy to snatch the word away before it can find root to grow.

To the shallow heart, the enemies of the word are tribulation, that is, affliction, or persecution. Jesus did not say *if* these would come. He said *when*. The word of the Kingdom *always* incites tribulation or persecution. The shallow heart has not been prepared to deal with tribulation or persecution so it falters and the word of the Kingdom withers and dies and they fall away.

To uncultivated hearts that are filled with weeds, the enemies to the word are the very things that have been growing in their hearts all along. However, Jesus mentions two specific weeds that will choke out the word of the Kingdom—the cares, worries of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth or riches. These are in conflict with the basic principles of the Kingdom and prevent the word from producing fruit.

The cares, worries of the world. The word for cares or worries in the original language is a very strong word. It means 'soul-dividing' or 'mind-dividing' anxiety. This type of anxiety divides the mind in such a manner that we fret about what to do. We are fractured into opposing thoughts and bounce back and forth between them. Jesus told us not to worry about tomorrow (Matt. 6:34). He used the same word—we are not to have mind-dividing anxiety about our life. He said this in the context of teaching about the Kingdom of God. We seek the Kingdom first. We put ourselves under our Unchanging King and Lord. We rest in Him so that we have no need to “take thought” about tomorrow. Otherwise, worry and anxiety will choke out the word of the Kingdom and prevent us from fulfilling our purpose and calling.

The deceitfulness of wealth or riches. Notice that wealth is deceitful. It is not something in which we can trust. Paul told Timothy, “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, ...” (1 Tim. 6:17 NASB). Paul also addresses the issue with Timothy of those who desire riches.

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Timothy 6:9-10 NASB)

Paul then tells Timothy, “But flee from these things, you man of God...” That is some strong language. Maybe we need to “listen up” before the word of the Kingdom is choked out.

Desires for other things (Mark 4:19). Mark adds this phrase to the list. This is when our wants and desires get out of control. The things of the world become more attractive than the things of the Kingdom. Paul told Timothy of a companion who did this, “for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; ...” (2Ti 4:10).

Could it be that we hear so little teaching on the Kingdom of God because we have allowed the enemies of the word of the Kingdom to cause it to be unfruitful? In some cases, the seed has been snatched away by the evil one. In other cases, it has sprouted but then withers and dies because of tribulation and persecution. In still other cases, it has tried to grow but has been choked out by our love of the world.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate our hearts. The hard, rocky heart has to be plowed deep by the Spirit. If we continue to refuse the plow, we will become unfruitful and useless to the Kingdom of God.

We must die to the kingdom of self in order for the Kingdom of God to find room in us. We must yield the territory of our heart to a new sovereign—King Jesus. Our allegiance is not to ourselves, and not to the world nor our secular government under which we live, but to the King and His Kingdom only.

Proceeding Word

We all know and understand that there is a maturing process in the Lord. In the Scriptures John describes three stages to this process: children, young men, and fathers. In each of these stages there are specific things that we have to learn in order to grow up and fulfill our calling in God.

The first two verses of Hebrews chapter six gives us six elementary principles of Christ; six foundation stones which we lay in our lives and then continue on to maturity. But the key to doing this is in the

third verse.

And this we will do, if God permits.(Hebrews 6:3 NASB)

We forget that our maturing process is directed and controlled by God. We supply the motivation but He supplies the revelation. If there are big holes in our foundation, He does not permit us to move on. Our Heavenly Father does not allow anyone into His Business that He doesn't think is ready; that is, anyone that doesn't have a father's heart and a renewed mind.

We are being prepared to participate in the purposes of God—the fulfilling of His plans and promises. When we have been prepared in some areas, the Lord will give us a *proceeding word* that will bring us into a place of practicing that which we have been prepared to do.

A proceeding word is only received when God permits us to go on. A proceeding word takes us into our destiny, our calling. It also takes us into tribulation, trials, opposition, enemy resistance and frustration. We must have been prepared beforehand to handle these things or we will have a tendency to become discouraged and let our calling fall away. This is dangerous territory, which is why the next few verses of Hebrews six warn us about the seriousness of it.

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.(Hebrews 6:4-6 NASB)

If a person who has matured in the areas listed falls away (this is a willful turning away from the Lord) it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.¹ This is why God doesn't necessarily permit people to go on into the deeper things of God. It is dangerous to the immature and the unprepared.

Proceeding Word Defined

A proceeding word is a particular type of “rhema” word, that is, a “quickened”, fresh spoken word from the Holy Spirit. We receive “rhema” words as the Lord brings revelation of the meaning and application of the written, recorded word to us and our circumstances. As we grow up in the Lord, we receive many “rhema” words from the Holy Spirit applying the Lord's teaching to our lives—making the word flesh in us as it was in Jesus.

However, there comes a day when we begin to come into the responsibilities of sonship. We have grown up in the family of believers but it is now time to “get a job”, to be “employed” in the Kingdom of God, to begin to fulfill our calling by doing the works prepared for us from the foundation of the world. This is when the Holy Spirit brings to us a *proceeding word* that takes us into our work in the Kingdom.

There are three primary characteristics of a proceeding word:

1. it is *always* deposited in us before it is confirmed by others;
2. it is *always* directional in its scope and nature;
3. it is *always* dependent upon the power of the Lord for it to be done.

¹ II Timothy 2:25 speaks of God granting repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth. We have a false idea that we can repent at any time; however, that is not the case. God is sovereign and grants repentance according to His foreknowledge. Hebrews 12:17 tells of Esau seeking repentance with tears but God did not grant it.

The result is that it *always* moves you toward the fulfillment of your destiny in the Lord.

A proceeding word comes as our preparation process reaches a point where we can be trusted by God to be obedient to His word and walk in the power of the Spirit. Our character has made progress toward becoming more like Jesus and we are able to be used by the Lord without becoming lifted up in pride.

The Example of Moses

The Scriptures make it clear that Moses had within him a sense of His purpose and calling—that he was to be a deliverer of the people of God from the oppression of Egypt. Remember, Moses was not a heathen. He was one of the people of God even though he had been raised in Pharaoh's court.

"Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. "But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. "And when he saw one *of them* being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. "And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. ([Acts 7:22-25 NASB](#))

Moses' real problems started when he tried to enter into his destiny by his natural understanding and the arm of the flesh. He acted on what had been deposited in his heart by God; but his actions arose from his natural strength and not by the direction and power of God. He also supposed that others of the people of God would understand his calling and destiny. Of course, they didn't understand. You cannot fulfill your God given destiny through the flesh.

When Moses attempted to fulfill his calling without a proceeding word from God, it created a set of circumstances that forced Moses to flee. He then entered into a forty year preparation time herding sheep on the backside of the desert. (Notice that his Egyptian education, the finest that the world had to offer, did not prepare him to enter into his calling.)

Moses, in the timing of God, received his proceeding word at the burning bush. (Note: the NASB puts quotes from the Old Testament in all caps in the New Testament.)

"After forty years had passed, AN ANGEL APPEARED TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT Sinai, IN THE FLAME OF A BURNING THORN BUSH. "When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look *more* closely, there came the voice of the Lord: 'I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB.' Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look. "BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, 'TAKE OFF THE SANDALS FROM YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE ON WHICH YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND. 'I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT AND HAVE HEARD THEIR GROANS, AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.' "This Moses whom they disowned, saying, 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?' is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. ([Acts 7:30-35 NASB](#))

Moses was going about his normal daily routine when he saw a bush burning that did not burn up, so he turned aside to see what was happening, which set the stage for God to speak to him and give him a

proceeding word. God works with us the same way. When we are prepared properly, He will interrupt our routine with something that draws our attention and then He will speak our proceeding word and we will enter into our destiny.

After receiving the proceeding word, Moses got his affairs in order with Jethro, his father-in-law and began the journey to Egypt in obedience to God. On the way, the Lord stopped him.

Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. (Exodus 4:24 NASB)

This Scripture says that the Lord sought to kill Moses. (Of course, He didn't try very hard or Moses would have been dead!) Now, this is a serious thing since Moses was only moving forward in obedience according to the proceeding word that God had given him. What had happened?

Even though Moses had been personally prepared for his calling, he had not fully prepared his family. He had not been fully obedient to the commands of God as they relate to his son.

Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." So He let him alone. At that time she said, "*You are* a bridegroom of blood"--because of the circumcision. (Exodus 4:25-26 NASB)

A proceeding word does not excuse us from the requirements of the covenant of God: circumcision of the flesh for Moses' son and circumcision of the heart for us. The Lord will not allow us to complete our destiny even after He gives us a proceeding word if we are neglecting the prerequisites of the covenant.

Once a proceeding word is in place, it is in place until it is accomplished. We can see this also in Moses' mission. After leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, Moses begins to take them toward the promised land by the standard caravan route. However God stops him and tells him to turn back and take them in a different direction in order to set up Pharaoh and his army for destruction.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea. "For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, 'They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' "Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." And they did so. (Exodus 14:1-4 NASB)

So, the children of Israel are positioned by the Lord with the Red Sea in front, the wilderness behind and Pharaoh and his army coming at them. The people were afraid and cried out to Moses and blamed him for their predicament. However, it is the Lord's response to Moses that is of particular interest to us.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. "As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. (Exodus 14:15-16 NASB)

The proceeding word that Moses had received involved the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt but it also involved them entering the land that God had promised them. Just because they were

now in what appeared to be dire circumstances did not mean that God had changed His word. There was no “plan B”. It did not matter that there was a sea between them and the fulfillment of the proceeding word.

God chided Moses for crying out to Him. It appears that Moses should have realized that the sea did not matter only that they proceed with what God had said. It is the same with us. Once we have taken action according to the proceeding word, nothing will prevent the complete accomplishment of all that is contained in that word. In all circumstances, God will orchestrate events to accomplish His purpose and to bring glory to His name. We have to exercise faith and the authority that is inherent in the proceeding word and not be distracted when we hear the thundering hoof beats of the world's army.

Prophetic Application

I have said all of the above as background for what I am about to say, which is what I believe the Lord is about to do.

There are a number of people that have been hidden by God on the backside of a desert just like Moses. These are people with a destiny in God, a powerful call of the Lord, who are being prepared to receive a proceeding word. The time is upon us. I believe that the Lord is about to bring to us clear proceeding words that relate to His purposes for the end times. Get ready to move into your destiny.

I don't mean that this is something you will hear from some pompous prophet who blows into town for a few days and prophesies a bunch of feel good words over everybody. The call of God, your destiny, is already in you. The Holy Spirit is about to anoint it and release it for fulfillment. Others will only confirm what you already know in your heart to be your purpose.

Look for the unusual thing as you go about your routine and don't pass by your burning bush without noticing it. You will only receive your proceeding word when you turn aside from your normal day to day affairs in order to hear the Lord. And for your own sake, don't frustrate the call of God by neglecting any covenant prerequisites for you and your family.

In the fullness of time that is approaching, God is bringing forth a manifestation of the sons of God who will proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. I believe that our proceeding words will fit into the context of that. Some will move forth speaking words of repentance, others words of judgment, others will demonstrate the power of God, others will present the Holiness and Righteousness of the Lord, and still others will speak revelation and understanding of end time scriptures and events. All of these words collectively will reveal the King and His righteous rule, established on the Throne by the Father so that He might head up all things and sum them up in Himself.

Present or Previous Truth

Proceeding words are both individual and corporate in nature. They occur as God “permits” us to move on in Him. When this happens, there comes a day when we begin to come into the responsibilities of sonship. We have grown up in the family of believers but it is now time to “get a job”, to be “employed” in the Kingdom of God, to begin to fulfill our calling by doing the works prepared for us from the foundation of the world. This is when the Holy Spirit brings to us a *proceeding word* that takes us into our work in the Kingdom and the fulfillment of our destiny in Him.

As we move forward in the proceeding word that God has given, we receive “present truth” words that

are applicable to our present circumstances and the will of God. Present truth is for the **NOW** and, if not acted upon, can become “previous truth” that is no longer applicable to our present circumstances. It is important that we understand this so that we don't become confused or presumptuous with the Lord.

One example of a proceeding word is the instruction to the children of Israel to leave Egypt and go to the promised land of Canaan. A New Testament example is the command of Jesus to go into all of the world and make disciples of all nations. We will look at these examples of proceeding words and the way that “present truth” words come forth as we move into them.

Example 1: the Promised Land

God promised the Israelites that He would take them to a land flowing with milk and honey and give it to them. This involved leaving where they were and going with God to where He promised. If they didn't go with the proceeding word they were simple left behind in Egypt.

After the trials of the wilderness, they reached the land of Canaan and sent in 12 spies to check out the land. As you know, 10 of the 12 gave a bad report about the inhabitants of the land and the people were ready to abandon the “proceeding” word that had caused them to come to Canaan. However, Joshua and Caleb spoke God's “present truth” word to them.

Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey. "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." [Numbers 14:6-9 NASB](#)

The is a present truth word to complete the proceeding word that had been previously given. It applied to their present circumstances. However, the people rejected the present truth word from Joshua and Caleb. As a result, the present truth word from Joshua and Caleb become a “previous truth” word that was no longer applicable to their circumstances. God spoke a new present truth word that was now appropriate for their situation.

"Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. 'Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. 'Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey--I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. 'But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. 'Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer *for* your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. 'According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, *even* forty years, and you will know My opposition. 'I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die.'" [Numbers 14:28-35 NASB](#)

The people didn't like the sound of the new present truth word, so they attempted to revert to the previous truth word. The scary thing is that they tried to do this with repentance.

When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly. In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised." [Numbers 14:39-40 NASB](#)

“We have sinned” is repentance. However, the New Testament tells us that repentance has to be granted by God [2 Timothy 2:25]. When a new present truth word comes, our repentance must relate to our disobedience to the previous word in light of the current word and our willingness to be obedient to the new word. They didn't do that. They only wanted a “do over” and revert to the previous truth which was now invalid as present truth. The result was that they were overcome by the enemies and many died.

Example 2: the Command of Jesus

We all know Jesus words about what we call the “great commission”. He told us to go and make disciples of all of the nations [Matthew 28:19] and to preach the gospel to all creation [Mark 16:15]. This is a clear proceeding word. We are to do this as a command from Jesus. However, when Paul and Barnabas attempted to follow the proceeding word, this is what happened:

[Acts 16:6-7 NASB](#) They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; (7) and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;

The present truth word for them in their current situation seemed to be in contradiction to the command of Jesus. We forget that the Holy Spirit directs our fulfillment of any proceeding word. He speaks present truth to us that is applicable to our present circumstances.

How many “evangelists” or “missionaries” do you know that have taken the command of Jesus to go but think that they can go anywhere to preach to anybody without a present truth word from the Holy Spirit? It is no wonder that these are ineffective in the things of the Kingdom.

Present Truth

Present truth is a time constrained word. It is for the present time for the present situation. As such, it can become a previous word that is no longer applicable for the present time and situation. A new present truth is needed.

A good example of the time element involved in present truth words is given by Jeremiah.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, 'Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens and eat their produce. 'Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. 'Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.' "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners

deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. 'For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD. "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. [Jeremiah 29:4-10 NASB](#)

Jeremiah gives them the word of the Lord that says to settle in to Babylon—to build houses, plant gardens, grow crops, pray for the welfare of the city, and other things associated with living. Then, He says that anybody that says anything else is a false prophet that the Lord has not sent. This present truth word was good for 70 years.

Daniel while reading Jeremiah realized that the 70 years of captivity was about to end and began to seek the Lord concerning His people. Both Jeremiah and Isaiah spoke present truth words that changed or replaced the previous truth.

Flee from the midst of Babylon, And each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, For this is the LORD'S time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her. [Jeremiah 51:6 NASB](#)

Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! Declare with the sound of joyful shouting, proclaim this, Send it out to the end of the earth; Say, "The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob." [Isaiah 48:20 NASB](#)

It is clear that you can't build houses, plant gardens and flee from Babylon at the same time. So, one present truth word is replaced by the succeeding present truth word. When the new word comes forth, it is disobedience to try to walk in the truth of the previous word.

Application

Today, there are many who claim to speak a “present truth” word. I receive emails of all sorts of “prophetic” words by many so-called “prophets”. Now that the economic crises is upon us, there has been an increase in both the doom and gloom “words” and the feel good, be happy “words”. We have to discern by the Holy Spirit, “Who has the present truth word?”

This is especially true corporately. Is God saying, “come out of Babylon”? If so, then staying in Babylon becomes disobedience. How can we be obedient if we don't know what God is saying? General truth is not enough. We must have proceeding words and present truth words that are God's will for our circumstances. These only come from our walk in the Spirit and our fellowship with other committed believers.

Recap

Jesus is the word made flesh, truth personified. His sharing of truth with us when He walked the earth in the flesh was limited by our ability to understand. He spoke in parables to hide truth from those who weren't ready for it. However, He told the disciples that the Holy Spirit was coming as the promise of the Father.

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will

disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. (John 16:12-14 NASB)

The Holy Spirit is to guide us into all truth. The things that we weren't able to bear then can be revealed by the Spirit now if our hearts have been prepared. There is an unfolding of truth and understanding in time as the purposes of God move toward their climax.