

Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

The Parable of the Farmer (Sower)

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.

Q1. *Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake:* Why did Jesus leave the shelter and comfort of the house?

Q2. *He got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore:* What motivated Jesus to leave the lakeshore for a seat on a boat?

³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed.

Q3. *Then he told them many things in parables:* What is a parable?

 The commentator Albert Barnes wrote a short essay on “parables”.

“The word ‘parable’ is derived from a Greek word signifying ‘to compare together,’ and denotes a similitude [similarity] taken from a natural object to illustrate a spiritual or moral subject. It is a narrative of some fictitious or real event, in order to illustrate more clearly some truth that the speaker wished to communicate.

“In early ages it was much used. Pagan writers, as Aesop, often employed it. In the time of Christ, it was in common use. The prophets had used it, and Christ employed it often in teaching his disciples. It is not necessary to suppose that the narratives were strictly true. The main thing – ‘the inculcation [use of repetition to impress something upon another] of spiritual truth’ – was gained equally, whether it was true or was only a supposed case. Nor was there any dishonesty in this. It was well understood no person was deceived. The speaker was not ‘understood’ to affirm the thing ‘literally narrated,’ but only to fix the attention more firmly on the moral truth that he presented.

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

“The ‘design’ of speaking in parables was the following:

1. To convey truth in a more interesting manner to the mind, adding to the truth conveyed the beauty of a lovely image or narrative.
2. To teach spiritual truth so as to arrest the attention of ignorant people, making an appeal to them through the ‘senses.’
3. To convey some offensive truth, some pointed personal rebuke, in such a way as to bring it ‘home’ to the conscience. Of this kind was the parable which Nathan delivered to David [2 Samuel 12:1-7](#), and many of our Saviour's parables addressed to the Jews.
4. To ‘conceal’ from one part of his audience truths which he intended others should understand. Thus, Christ often, by this means, delivered truths to his disciples in the presence of the Jews, which he well knew the Jews would not understand; truths pertaining to them particularly, and which he was under no obligations to explain to the Jews. See [Mark 4:33](#); [Matthew 13:13-16](#).

“Our Saviour's parables are distinguished above all others for clearness, purity, chasteness, importance of instruction, and simplicity. They are taken mostly from the affairs of common life, and intelligible, therefore, to all people. They contain much of ‘himself’ - his doctrine, life, design in coming, and claims, and are therefore of importance to all people; and they are told in a style of simplicity intelligible to the child, yet instructive to people of every rank and age. In his parables, as in all his instructions, he [outshone] all people in the purity, importance, and sublimity [supremacy] of his doctrine.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/13-3.htm>, retrieved: 2026-09-04.]

Psalm 78:1-3 [NIV-1984]

[Psalm 78 is a historical summary of God’s interactions with the Jews: God’s love and provision; the Jews apostasy; God’s judgment and punishment; finally, the Jews repent. Repeat.]

¹ O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.

² I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old — ³ what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us.

Q4. **Then he told them many things in parables:** Thinking back over the past several StudySheets, what was the general attitude of the Jewish religious leaders, especially the Pharisees, toward Jesus?

Q5. **Then he told them many things in parables:** When Jesus spoke in parables, was the Father, in essence, judging (discernment + punishment) the Jewish religious leaders? (Jesus’s Words came from the Father: [John 12:49–50](#); [John 8:28](#); [John 14:10](#).)

Yes? Maybe? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

If yes, what was the apparent judgment?

Isaiah 6:9-10 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

⁹ And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not understand; And keep on looking, but do not gain knowledge.’ ¹⁰ Make the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes blind, So that they will not see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.”

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

Q6. *As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path:* Think about a “*path*” that has been trampled upon for decades, if not centuries; what are the characteristics of a “*path*” or hiking trail?

Q7. *The birds came and ate it up:* Why would the birds eat-up the seed? (Hints: ① Do birds like seed? ② Was the seed buried? ③ Was the seed easily spotted? ④ How hard did a bird have to work in order to find and then eat that seed?)

① Do birds like seed? Yes? Maybe? No? (Thoughts?)

② Was the seed buried? Yes? Maybe? No? (Thoughts?)

③ Was the seed easily spotted? Yes? Maybe? No? (Thoughts?)

④ How hard did a bird have to work? Very hard? Moderate? Easy? Thoughts?

Q8. *As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up:* A parable is a simple story that has an underlying moral or ethical message – a metaphor or allegory. ① Who do you think “*he*” (*a farmer*, vs 3) represents? ② What does the “*seed*” represent? ③ What or who does “*birds*” represent?

① Who do you think “*he*” represents?

② What does the “*seed*” represent?

③ What or who does “*birds*” represent?

 Later in this chapter, Matthew provides Jesus’s explanation for the various elements that comprise this parable.

Day 2

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⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

Q9. *Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow:* What might be the characteristics of “*rocky places*”? (Hint: see vs 5.)

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

Q10. *Other seed fell among thorns*: What might “thorns” represent?

⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Q11. *Still other seed fell on good soil*: What does “good soil” symbolize?

⁹He who has ears, let him hear.”

Q12. *He who has ears, let him hear*: Let us assume that almost everyone in Jesus’s audience can hear the words He is speaking. Therefore, is Jesus speaking about a person’s physical ears? (I know that I have an uncanny ability to tune-out people.) Or might He be talking about ‘spiritual ears’ — the ability to hear the spoken truth, discern its symbolic meaning, and allow it to lodge in the person’s heart (soul)?

Physical ears? Spiritual ears? Other?

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

Why Speak in Parables?

¹⁰ The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" ¹¹ He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them."

Q13. *The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them:* What are “the secrets of the kingdom of heaven”? (What does Jesus mean?)

Q14. *The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them:* Why have “the secrets of the kingdom of heaven” been “given to you, but not to them”? Who is “you”? Who is “them”? And why?

“Given to you”? Who is “you”?	Why is it “given”?
“Not to them”? Who is “them”?	Why “not to them”?

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

¹² Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

Q15. *Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance:* What does “more” and “abundance” represent? “More” what? An “abundance” of what? (Hint: see verse 11)

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

Q16. **Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance:** Does “Whoever has will be given more” mean that God will give the Believer more “*knowledge*” like an endless buffet of food? Or does it mean that as a Believer prays, studies, and strives to understand Scripture, he or she will be granted an ever-increasing clarity? (Does obedience play a role? Must our faith be put into action?)

Give the Believer more? Prays, studies, and strives? (Thoughts?)

Q17. **Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him:** Does a disobedient Believer have to worry about Kingdom knowledge being taken away from him or her?

Yes? Maybe? No? (Thoughts?)

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV-1984]

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Q18. **Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him:** Does a disobedient Believer have to worry about his or her salvation being taken away? (The Believer has not spoken against or blasphemed the Holy Spirit. [Matthew 12:31-32](#))

Yes? Maybe? No? (Thoughts?)



In this commentator's personal experience as I have developed these lessons/StudySheets, I have at times felt that I simply have to recharge – when I felt the need to take a vacation from this work. When these ‘recharge’ occasions have occurred, I have shut-down, stopped opening my Bible, and stopped reciting the few verses I’ve been able to memorize. Regardless of the length of time I ‘vacationed’, when I resumed this work, my mind seemed to have forgotten a lot of Biblical Truth (Kingdom knowledge).

So, what is my takeaway from these learning experiences? God wants me to remain in His Word, despite my “feelings”. In my specific case, I think God was okay with me taking a break from lesson development, but He wanted me to continue reading and studying His holy Word.

Did I lose the indwelling Holy Spirit? No. Did God reduce my Kingdom knowledge? Yes. And it took dedicated work to regain it.

Don't repeat my mistakes. Learn from me!

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand."

Q19. ***Though seeing, they do not see:*** What is one thing everyone, who has followed Jesus, has seen?

A M R C E

Q20. ***Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand:*** Thinking back over the past verses we've studied, have the Pharisees accepted and taken to heart the miracles and teachings of the Messiah? (Hints: see [Matthew 12:14](#); [Matthew 12:22-24](#); [Matthew 12:38](#))

Yes? No? Were the Pharisees: Supportive? Antagonistic? Worshipful? Accusatory? Merciful? Hostile? (Thoughts?)

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Proverbs 29:1 [New Living Translation (NLT)]

Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery.

Q21. ***This is why I speak to them in parables:*** If Jesus had spoken plainly, instead of using parables, would more people have come to Him in belief?

Yes? Maybe? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

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Q22. (Ministry) ***This is why I speak to them in parables:*** How can we, who believe in the saving grace of Christ Jesus, do a better job of convincing someone to believe that Jesus is real, that Jesus loves them, that Jesus wants all to be saved, that Jesus wants him or her to confess belief in His saving grace, and that Jesus wants all to come into repentance?

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 Jesus is real.

Matthew 16:13, 16-17 [NIV-1984]

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" . . .

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

 Jesus loves everyone.

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

John 3:16-18 [NIV-1984]

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

 Jesus wants all to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

³ This is good, and it pleases God our Savior. ⁴ God wants all people to be saved. And he wants everyone to know the truth.

 Jesus wants him or her to confess belief in His saving grace.

Romans 10:8-10 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

⁸ This is what the Scripture says: "God's teaching is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart." That is the teaching of faith that we tell. ⁹ If you declare [confess] with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved. ¹⁰ We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we declare with our mouths to say that we believe, and so we are saved.

1 John 4:15 [New Living Translation (NLT)]

All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God.

 Jesus wants all to come into repentance.

1 John 1:9 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrongs we have done.

 Jesus wants all to believe.

2 Peter 3:9 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

The Lord is not slow in doing what he promised — the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost. He wants everyone to change his heart and life.

 Generally, scholars believe that the prophet Isaiah wrote his book between the years of 739 to 681 B.C. and that he was sawn in two on command of the evil Jewish King Manasseh in 680 B.C. (Manasseh was evil. He did evil. God judged. God punished. Manasseh repented! God forgave. God restored him as king. Manasseh spent his remaining years trying to undo his previous evil – with some success – see [2 Chronicles 33](#).)

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: " 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. ¹⁵ For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' [\[Isaiah 6:9-10\]](#)

Q23. (Verses 14 & 15) As you read verses 14 & 15, what conclusion(s) do you draw? (There is no right answer. Please find a conclusion based on your life experience and Biblical knowledge.)

Q24. (Verses 14 & 15) Does God's abilities include the ability to simply foretell future human events? Or might He guide human events so that prophecies occur?

Foretell events? Guide events? Both? Neither? Thoughts?

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ 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.

Q25. ***But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear:*** To whom does "your" refer? (Whose "ears" and whose "eyes"? See [Matthew 13:10](#).)

Q26. 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: Can you think of any one person who longingly waited for the Messiah? (Hint: [Luke 2:26](#); [Luke 2:38](#))

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Farmer

¹⁸ "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

Q27. *When anyone hears the message about the kingdom:* What is the “message”?

Q28. *What was sown in his heart:* What does “sown in his heart” mean? (Hint: Does it mean that the Word of God goes directly to a person’s heart and soul, and dependent upon the ‘condition of the person’s heart – hard-packed, rocky, thorny, or fertile/fruitful – it can be “snatched away”?)

Q29. *When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart:* I will frequently read a verse and ask myself, “What exactly does this mean?!?” Do I have to worry about “*the evil one . . . snatching [it] away*”?

Yes? Maybe? No? (Thoughts?)

Q30. *When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart:* What is your personal strategy to unlock the meaning behind some of these more difficult passages of Scripture?

Thoughts?

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

- Q31. *When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart:* Did you notice that God has given permission to Satan to “*snatch . . . away what was sown in his heart*”? Why would God permit Satan to “*snatch . . . away*” the “*message*”? (Hint: Is it a judgment?)
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Job 1:12^a [New Living Translation (NLT)]

[God places constraints around Satan. Satan does not have permission to do whatever he wants to saints. Note: Satan does not worry about nonbelievers – they are already in his clenched fist.]

^{12a} “All right, you may test him,” the Lord said to Satan.

Luke 22:31-32 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you [Greek: “you” is plural in this verse], that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:31-32 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

[The same verses in a different translation.]

³¹ “Satan has asked to test all of you as a farmer tests his wheat. Simon, Simon, ³² I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! Help your brothers be stronger when you come back to me.”

²⁰ The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

- Q32. *But since he has no root:* What does Jesus mean “*he has no root*”? (Hint: another metaphor – a struck matchstick and a flaring flame – does the flame remain lit?)
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- Q33. *When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away:* Does Jesus assure us that once we believe in His saving grace we, who believe, will never experience troubles in this world?

Yes? Maybe? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

John 16:33 [New Living Translation (NLT)]

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth, you will have many trials

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

Q34. ***When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away:*** Does Jesus assure us that once we believe in His saving grace we, who believe, will never experience troubles in this world?

Yes? Maybe? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)



In past lessons, we have discussed that many fervent, zealous missionaries have experienced persecution as they proclaimed the Gospel of Christ Jesus. We are reminded of the demise of many of the original disciples.

The “rocky” person, whom Jesus referenced in His parable, would never lay down his/her life for having faith in Christ Jesus. If a government persecutes a Believer for their unwavering faith, the “rocky” person would be the first to deny their faith and betray the Lord’s sacrifice.

I liken our faith walk much like a matchstick that has just been struck. The flame flares brightly. But then the flame quickly goes out. The flame may be extinguished by a gentle puff of wind, or because it no longer has wood to burn. The gentle puff of wind could be from a friend saying something like, “You don’t really believe in those fairy tales, do you?” or a look of reproof from someone the person admires. Satan knows that it takes very little to sow doubt – he wants to lose no one to Christ Jesus.

If you take the lighted matchstick and gently coax it with tinder, splinters of wood, or dried grass, your flaring matchstick can eventually become a comforting bonfire or an incessantly advancing wildfire (much like the Rev. Billy Graham’s crusades of the mid- to late-1900s). The tinder in this ‘matchstick’ analogy is Bible Study, prayer, and service; anything that grows a person’s faith.

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

Day 6

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²² The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

Q35. ***The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns:*** ① Who sows “*thorns*”? ② In our lives today, what might the “*thorns*” represent?

① Who sows “thorns”?

② What do “thorns” represent?

Q36. ***The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful:*** Why would “worries” and “wealth” interfere with faith “making it unfruitful”?

²³ But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Q37. ***But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil:*** How do we become “*good soil*”?
(Hint: how does a gardener prepare soil for flowers? Spade/till the soil, removing any roots, weeds, or rocks; add any needed soil conditioners; fertilize; water; let the worked soil idle; plant bulbs/seeds; keep it watered; enjoy.)

Romans 10:17 [NIV-1984]

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Q38. ***Who hears the word and understands it:*** How do we “understand” “the Word”?

Lesson 24: Matthew 13:1-23

Q39. *Produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown*: What does “*crop*” represent?

Q40. *Produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown*: What must we, who believe, do to “*produce crops*”?

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