

Evolution of a Seed

Scripture Reading:

Amos 9:13 “BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE **LORD**, THAT THE PLOWMAN SHALL OVERTAKE THE REAPER, AND THE TREADER OF GRAPES HIM THAT SOWETH SEED; AND THE MOUNTAINS SHALL DROP SWEET WINE, AND ALL THE HILLS SHALL MELT.”

This scripture was recorded by Amos as part of a promise concerning the coming of the church, the new kingdom of David, the restoration of the tabernacle of God that He might dwell among His people. In that kingdom the blessings provided by God will be so plentiful and so great that it would be as though the harvest wouldn't be completed until it was time to plow again. While we enjoy these blessings it is also a fact that within that kingdom one of our greatest responsibilities is to be “sowing the seed of the kingdom” as the song we just sang asks us to consider. The “sowing of the seed of the kingdom” is our responsibility:

“FOR WE ARE LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD: YE ARE GOD'S HUSBANDRY, **ye** ARE GOD'S BUILDING.” **I Corinthians 3:9**

So as we study this evening, let us look at this work of sowing and follow the seed through its natural process from the every beginning of the preparation of the seed bed to the harvest. Thus our lesson has been titled the “Evolution of a Seed.”

First of all, just as the farmer has to have a proper environment in which to sow his seed we need to understand the environment in which we sow our spiritual seed. Though other elements are involved we will call this environment:

SOIL

We all know that there are different kinds of soils just about anywhere you would want to look on the face of our earth. In the hills where I grew up this soil could be rather shallow at times. In fact the plow that we used was mounted on a three-wheel chassis and had a spring loaded tow bar. When the plow share would hit one of those big rocks or a limestone ledge barely hidden by thin soils the tow bar would trip the plow loose from the tractor draw bar instead of breaking a plow share. This soil was representative of one of the soils where the seed fell in Jesus parable of the soils.

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Matthew 13:20-21 “BUT HE THAT RECEIVED THE SEED INTO STONY PLACES, THE SAME IS HE THAT HEARETH THE WORD, AND ANON WITH JOY RECEIVETH IT; YET HATH HE NOT ROOT IN HIMSELF, BUT DURETH FOR A WHILE: FOR WHEN TRIBULATION OR PERSECUTION ARISETH BECAUSE OF THE WORD, BY AND BY HE IS OFFENDED.”

Frequently we are going to sow the seed of the kingdom of God on stony ground, or ground covered with weeds or thistles. But that doesn't relieve us of the responsibility to sow. As the Apostle Paul writes in **I Corinthians 3:6 and 7**; our lot is to sow, God gives the increase.

Just as a seed of grain needs water the seed of the kingdom needs water to grow and mature as well. The Apostle Peter makes it very clear to anyone who will read with an open mind:

I Peter 3:21 “THE LIKE FIGURE WHEREUNTO *even* BAPTISM DOTH ALSO NOW SAVE US (NOT THE PUTTING AWAY OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, BUT THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD,) BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST:”

Or as the Hebrew writer tells us:

Hebrews 10:22 “LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A TRUE HEART IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, HAVING OUR HEARTS SPRINKLED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE, AND OUR BODIES WASHED WITH PURE WATER.”

Those then who have had the seed of the kingdom planted in their hearts and their sins washed away (**Acts 22:16**) are now in Christ (**Galatians 3:26-27**) and have been added to His church (**Acts 2:47**). It is in the church, the body of Christ that we are sanctified or set aside to grow and mature:

Hebrews 2:11-12 “FOR BOTH HE THAT SANCTIFIETH AND THEY WHO ARE SANCTIFIED *are* ALL OF ONE: FOR WHICH CAUSE HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM BRETHERN, SAYING, I WILL DECLARE THY NAME UNTO MY BRETHERN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE.”

It is in the church that we glorify God through his Son, Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 3:21 “UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.”

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It is in Christ, and subsequently in His church, where we have the blessings promised to all mankind through the grace of God. It is in the church where the seed is fed, cultivated and sometimes even pruned to produce the fruit for harvest that God requires. It is in the church that the plant that the seed of the kingdom brought forth lives:

I Corinthians 15:22 "FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE."

SEED

Now let's look at the seed itself. There is only one seed that will produce Christians, children of God. There is only one seed that will grow within us and prepare us for the time that we will stand before the judgment seat of God. As Jesus explains to his disciples about his parable of the sower:

Luke 8:11 "NOW THE PARABLE IS THIS: THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD."

Nothing else works. Just as the seed wheat we used on the farm had to be pure, nothing else would do. Nothing contaminated by the doctrines of men will produce the result that God requires.

This seed, when it is sown in good hearts, brings forth a penitent heart; a penitent heart that generates obedience to the commandments of God and makes us alive. It will make us a new creature, renewed, made fit for the kingdom of God. As the Apostle Paul writes:

Romans 6:3-5 "KNOW YE NOT, THAT SO MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH: THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. FOR IF WE HAVE BEEN PLANTED TOGETHER IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH, WE SHALL BE ALSO *in the likeness* OF *his* RESURRECTION:"

Because just like the seed that must be sown, then we must die before we can germinate and bring forth new life. Our old man must die to the sins of the world, must be buried with Christ in baptism and then raised up again to live a new life. Paul emphasizes this again in Colossians chapter two; recording in verse 12 that we must be:

"BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, WHEREIN ALSO YE ARE RISEN WITH HIM THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD, WHO HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD." **Colossians 2:12**

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The seed that is the word of God is also our source of spiritual food, that which will generate spiritual growth. It will generate a spiritual life that will allow us to walk in the strait way that leads to life (**Matthew 7:14**). Spiritual growth starts just like physical growth starts. The Apostle Peter give instructions for the care and feeding of spiritual infants:

I Peter 2:2 "AS NEWBORN BABES, DESIRE THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY:"

Then as we mature and age spiritually we are expected to grow. Peter covers that aspect of spiritual growth as well:

II Peter 3:18 "BUT GROW IN GRACE, AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. TO HIM BE GLORY BOTH NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN."

And as we continue to grow we are admonished to build upon those basic principles that we learned as part of the "SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD", to go beyond the spiritual food given to spiritual babes. After explaining that his readers have reached an age whereby they should have progressed beyond milk the Hebrew writer explains that we should now be able to take the strong meat of the word of God:

"THEREFORE LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION; NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS, AND OF FAITH TOWARD GOD," **Hebrews 6:1**

The seed of the Word of God what lives and grows in us will make us such that Christ will live in us:

II Corinthians 4:11-12 "FOR WE WHICH LIVE ARE ALWAYS DELIVERED UNTO DEATH FOR JESUS' SAKE, THAT THE LIFE ALSO OF JESUS MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST IN OUR MORTAL FLESH. SO THEN DEATH WORKETH IN US, BUT LIFE IN YOU."

With Christ living in us then we are fit for the kingdom of God, our lives are hid in Christ and we are prepared to be with him in glory:

Colossians 3:3-4 "FOR YE ARE DEAD, AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY."

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But then we need more than a proper place to sow the proper seed; the seed of the kingdom, the Word of God, we need:

LABORERS

I suppose that when most people think of laborers sowing the seed of the kingdom that they first think about preachers. And it is true that this is the role that preachers play in God's plan of redemption. We know this first because of this commandment:

Mark 16:15-16 "AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED."

And we know that it is true that we need preachers to proclaim God's word, men who would dedicate themselves to that purpose. As Paul writes:

Romans 10:15 "AND HOW SHALL THEY PREACH, EXCEPT THEY BE SENT? AS IT IS WRITTEN, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THEM THAT PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, AND BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

We need men like Philip who when the opportunity was presented even went to the Samaritans, people hated by the Jews, and preached Christ unto them:

Acts 8:5 "THEN PHILIP WENT DOWN TO THE CITY OF SAMARIA, AND PREACHED CHRIST UNTO THEM."

And then while he was there he was called by God to go and meet the Ethiopian treasurer on the Gaza Road (**Acts 8:26**). There Philip worked and did that which the Apostle Paul encourages Timothy to do in:

II Timothy 2:2 "AND THE THINGS THAT THOU HAST HEARD OF ME AMONG MANY WITNESSES, THE SAME COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN, WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO."

But does this responsibility fall entirely to preachers? Oh, No!, On, No! It is a responsibility that falls upon everyone who has named the name of Christ and has become a child of God.

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The Book of Hebrew was written to "HOLY BRETHREN", "PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING", it was written to Hebrew Christians of that day and all who partake of the blessings of God found in Christ Jesus. And in that book we are warned:

"FOR WHEN FOR THE TIME YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, YE HAVE NEED THAT ONE TEACH YOU AGAIN WHICH **be** THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD; AND ARE BECOME SUCH AS HAVE NEED OF MILK, AND NOT OF STRONG MEAT." **Hebrews 5:12**

And as though we need more evidence; while what man calls the great commission in Mark says to go preach, that recorded by Matthew says "GO TEACH".

Matthew 28:19-20 "GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, **even** UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN."

But someone says in this day, in the environment in which we find ourselves in today's world, that don't work any more. People are not interested in "church". People don't have time to consider their eternal destiny, even when they believe that they have such. Are we saying that God gave us a commission that we cannot fulfill, that he gave us a task to perform that is impossible for us to carry out? The Apostle Paul writes:

I Corinthians 3:6-7 "I HAVE PLANTED, APOLLOS WATERED; BUT GOD GAVE THE INCREASE. SO THEN NEITHER IS HE THAT PLANTETH ANY THING, NEITHER HE THAT WATERETH; BUT GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE."

Our lot in life is to sow and water and if we're doing that; God will take care of the rest. I know of a congregation of the Lord's church in Newport News, Virginia. Their preacher is a member of an internet group of which I'm also a member. During the past six months they have probably baptized at least 15 people. They had another baptism this week and another preacher in the group asked Brother Daniel Denham who preaches there; what are you doing to generate your success? His answer:

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“A mixture (of things). We have been studying Romans on Wed. evening. I’ve been preaching a series on marriage on Sunday morning and the Scheme of Redemption on Sunday evening. We are studying I Cor. in the Sunday morning adult class. We have other periodic classes during the month at the building. And we have a number of brethren, including myself, conducting weekly home Bible studies, Bible studies at the building with prospects, most of whom have come to us by way of the correspondence course efforts (John Hurt & Ira Rice series, et. al.), personal contacts (friends and family of members), street traffic (we are located on the busiest street in Newport News), and door-knocking.”

In other words they are working as a congregation to sow the seed of the Kingdom of God and it’s working just like it always has for the past 2,000 years.

Elders also have a special commission to sow the seed of the kingdom:

Acts 20:28 “TAKE HEED THEREFORE UNTO YOURSELVES, AND TO ALL THE FLOCK, OVER THE WHICH THE HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS, TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.”

It is our responsibility to make sure that the congregation is properly feed. It is the elder’s responsibility that the flock of God is feed the proper spiritual food (seed) that its members are properly nourished spiritually.

If we have the right soil, the proper environment in which to sow our seed; if we have the right seed, the Word of God; if we are willing to work at it, to be laborers in God’s vineyard; then that seed will bear:

FRUIT

Matthew 13:23 “BUT HE THAT RECEIVED SEED INTO THE GOOD GROUND IS HE THAT HEARETH THE WORD, AND UNDERSTANDETH *it*; WHICH ALSO BEARETH FRUIT, AND BRINGETH FORTH, SOME AN HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTY, SOME THIRTY.”

Well, what kind of fruit are we talking about? It begins with faith in God and faith in the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 “SO THEN FAITH *cometh* BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.”

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Faith, that belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that belief that all spiritual blessings come to those who are in Christ. Faith that when it is mature causes one to repent of their past sins, confess that he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and put on Christ in baptism. The seed of the kingdom of God generates the faith that causes us to be born of water and of the spirit as Jesus told Nicodemus:

John 3:5 "JESUS ANSWERED, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER AND *of* THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Just like the seed that is sown, the carnal man is sown, i.e. buried and then raised a new man.

Romans 6:3-5 "KNOW YE NOT, THAT SO MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH: THAT LIKE AS CHRIST WAS RAISED UP FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. FOR IF WE HAVE BEEN PLANTED TOGETHER IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH, WE SHALL BE ALSO *in the likeness* OF *his* RESURRECTION:"

New men, new women, new people raised to walk a new life, a life of service to God, Jesus Christ and His church. Men and women who see no problem with living their lives as the Apostle beseeched the Roman brethren to do:

Romans 12:1 "I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YE PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, *which is* YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE."

This seed produces Christians that like Paul reach the evening of their lives with this mindset:

"FOR I AM NOW READY TO BE OFFERED, AND THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND. I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISH MY COURSE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH: HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, SHALL GIVE ME AT THAT DAY: AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT UNTO ALLTHEM ALSO THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING." **II Timothy 4:6-8**

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And this brings us to the final part of the evolution of this seed, the:

HARVEST

We speaking of the harvest that will occur when Jesus returns to claim his church his people and his inheritance. We are speaking of the end of time and judgment. Those who watched him ascend after his resurrection were promised:

Acts 1:11 "WHICH ALSO SAID, YE MEN OF GALILEE, WHY STAND YE GAZING UP INTO HEAVEN? THIS SAME JESUS, WHICH IS TAKEN UP FROM YOU INTO HEAVEN, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN HIM GO INTO HEAVEN."

Those who have received the seed of the kingdom and obeyed the commandments of God are sanctified (set aside) and preserved blameless:

I Thessalonians 5:23 "AND THE VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY; AND *I pray God* YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS UNTO THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Those who have been sanctified through obedience to the Word of God will be looking forward to this event with joy:

Titus 2:13 "LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST;"

Knowing that as Jesus promised his disciples in **John 14:1-3** He has gone to prepare a place for you and I. A place prepared for the time when this earthly house is dissolved again into dust and we leave it behind:

II Corinthians 5:1 "FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF *this* TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS."

We know that not "IF" but when our earthly house is dissolved, we will be given a new body, a new house, "ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS."

But the seed of the kingdom of God that fell on stony ground, that fell among the thorns and thistles; that fell upon a rock where the birds ate it will bear no fruit. Those hearts and souls that did not accept the seed will only bear pain, grief and sorrow at the harvest. They will be among those:

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**“WHO SHALL BE PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER;”
II Thessalonians 2:9**

The question all of mankind must answer is which are we? Has the seed of the kingdom evolved within us and generated full-grown, working, citizens of His kingdom. Or are we among those who have started but grown weak, lax in our service, or are we among those who have never received that seed; never accepted the Word of God?

Invitation