

## **Assessing the Genuineness of a Person's Salvation**

Perhaps one's first response to such a provocative question is that only God can. This is correct. Then how and why, and by what right do any of us have to conclude that a "brother" is in fact a saved soul? We each draw these conclusions from what is often little more than superficial evidence, that is a veneer or façade. I believe that we often draw conclusions too flippantly. This, of course, is not true in all cases. Those who are saved, "walk the walk" consistently, very seldom wavering, thus provide compelling evidence of a true faith. True saving faith can also be demonstrated in those whose changed lives are sustaining and strikingly apparent to close family members who are able to recognize a dramatic change from the long continued original person to the changed person.

As I waited for Cindy to finish her work regarding Volume II, it actually pained my heart to be wasting my limited and most precious time. Our Lord's response was to lead me to the "sower parables," especially to the third sowing. What follows is my response to that prompting.

I don't believe that many of us take to heart sufficiently the messages given in the parable of the sower as found in Matthew 13:3-8. *"3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 some fell upon stony place, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among the thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."*

Through the Lord's guidance we learn of 4 situations regarding the Lord's sowing seeds, that is, sowing His Word. The first speaks of seeds dropped on the wayside and were devoured by fowls (birds). The second sowing was onto hard rocky ground where they sprouted, but soon died from lack of sufficient soil. The third sowing was into a thorny area. There the soil was good,

but the thorns choked them. Finally the fourth sowing was onto deep rich soil where the Lord's Word grew well and produced much fruit, even 100-fold.

Notice that our Lords' last words regarding this matter in verse 9 are: "*9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" As we should realize, this is not a casual salutation. It is a command. Who has ears to hear? It's not the worldly people. It's those who take God's Word seriously. It's a special admonition to take very serious what this parable of the sower tells us, because we are the only ones with the ears that are capable of this hearing. There is likely much more to learn from the parable than has been given me to understand.

The third sowing is the one on which I need to focus. Notice in verse 7 it says that God's Word, that is His seed, fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up and choked. From this I conclude that the thorns had not yet grown but began to grow from the seed Satan then planted when he saw what God had done with that good third soil.

It was his way to try to negate, that is to prevent God's seed from being affective. As I interpret this, Satan's thorn seed sprouted and began to grow slightly after God's seed, that is when Satan realized what God had done. By the time Satan's seed had grown sufficiently to choke God's seeds, our Lord's seeds were capable of, and did produce fruit. Notice that the thorns were not fully grown, but only began to spring up, that is to begin growing as Satan's response to what God had done. Satan didn't anticipate God's work. He simply responded to it. Apparently Satan was forbidden to do anything about the fourth planting.

After careful study of these verses and how carefully and precisely they are written, I find it most difficult to draw any sensible or rationale conclusion that that cited above. Satan was well pleased with how the first two plantings did nothing to advance God's purpose. Perhaps it was complacency because of these failures of God's purpose to have been served. At any rate, it was after God made the third planting that Satan did rise to the occasion, because only by then did he see that God's seed had already sprouted. Thus they would have borne fruit for a while before the thorns grew high and dense enough to terminate their fruitfulness. I cannot see any other credible alternative to the above conclusion, that is in the context of actual weeds.

The fact is, however, those literal physical seed are not what this is all about. What is written is a perfect analogy from beginning to end of what God and Satan seek to establish in the hearts, souls and minds of all mankind. The sequence of each stage of the process is perfectly depicted by the literal Word and physical weed as described in the parable.

In these last days of the end times, God, by His permitted will is allowing Satan through all of his cults and false teachers, to continue to diminish the number of those who would be saved. This is predicated by Romans 11:25 "...until the fullness of the Gentiles come in."

Those who have and care for their own gardens are able to relate to, and understand how very appropriate this analogy really is. Any gardener, who does not keep removing the weeds, will not harvest much of anything that was planted.

Thank you dear Lord for showing me these things and through this work to have been, I pray, gainfully employed in Your service.

Amen!