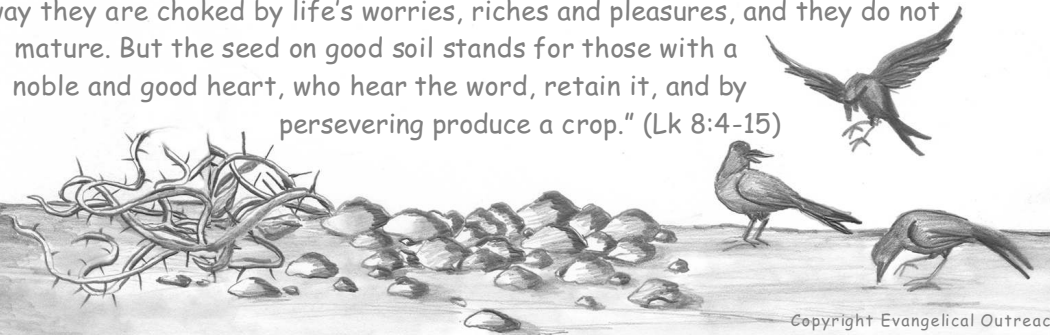


The Meaning Of The Parable Of The Sower



This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. **They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.** The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." (Lk 8:4-15)



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In the Parable of the Sower, the Lord spoke of four types of people who hear the word of God. Type A never gets saved—the seed never produced a plant. Type B is the one we'll focus in upon in detail, those on the rock. Type C is the person who hears the word of God, but his fruitfulness for God is choked out by thorns—the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth. Only Type D person has a heart likened unto good soil that produces a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

In reference to the Type B person mentioned in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus said, "Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. **They believe for a while, but in time of testing they fall away**" (Lk 8:13). To *believe for a while* must mean the person who heard the word of God truly and genuinely had saving faith. We must conclude this since life was produced in this type of person from the word of God through their personal faith, unlike Type A who never believed and consequently never got saved. Referring to Type A, Jesus said, "Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved" (Lk 8:12). The word of God (seed) never produced life in the form of a plant for Type A because that person never believed. If that person would have believed he would have been saved. But this is not the case for Type B person. Type B person hears the word and receives it with joy (Mt 13:20). Also, there can be no legitimate doubt over this type of person believing or not, for Jesus clearly stated that this type of person did believe, unlike Type A. He said that they *believe for a while*. Please note, the Lord used the same Greek word (*pisteuo*) in Lk 8:13 for *believe* that he used in verse 12 which was lacking for salvation in Type A person!

Furthermore, in regard to Type B person, he lasts only a short time (Mt 13:21). So, again, there was true, spiritual life in that type of person, but it didn't continue, according to Jesus. This is Jesus' interpretation of the parable. Therefore, it is not open for another possible interpretation! So, the man did have personal faith which produced spiritual life for a time period. If such a person would die physically while he was still believing and before he falls away, he would enter the kingdom of God.

What is the time of testing? "When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away" (Mt 13:21). In other words, trouble and persecution for godly living caused Type B person to stop believing, which consequently terminated his spiritual life. This is shown by the plant drying up and dying. It's not that the person never believed to begin with, but trouble and persecution because of the word adversely affected this type of person to not continue to believe and stay alive. So then, trouble and persecution because of true faith will always come to those who believe. If you are a real Christian, persecution will come to you as a test. According to Lk 8:13, persecution for godly living is your time of

testing. Such might come in the mild form of mockery or being excluded by others (Lk 6:22,23). But when it comes, regardless the form, don't let it destroy you spiritually like it has destroyed many.

What does it mean to fall away? If we compare Lk 8:6 to 8:13, we will notice that Jesus said the plants withered when they fell away. In other words, it was when the plants withered (or died) that the people fell away. We can't die unless we first had life! Therefore, one must first be saved before he can fall away, according to Jesus' teaching.

Also, the same Greek word translated *withered* in Lk 8:6 is used in Jn 15:6 which is what happens to branches that are severed from the Vine. Jesus gave us both of these passages and used this word in the same sense in these two places to mean *die spiritually*, which he termed *fall away* in Luke. Again, this occurs when a person stops believing. So it is clearly possible to have complete loss of faith, though once saved always saved (OSAS) denies this.

What did Jesus mean by they have no root? (The NASB says, "no firm root.") To understand what the Lord meant by this, we must observe that there was a real plant that sprang up. After a time period, that same plant died. In other words, the plant didn't endure. This is likened to the type of believer that doesn't continue with the Lord after his regeneration.

It's critical to know that a temporary faith to OSAS proponents means one that never produced regeneration. As already proven, spiritual life did exist for a time in such people. Hence, such passed from death to life, then again back to death as shown by the seed producing life which later died at the point of unbelief.

There is no way to know how many people that we have personally observed in our generation who got truly saved, then fell away right before our own eyes, according to Jesus' teaching. Of course, to protect OSAS this is flatly denied with a simple, "they were never really saved to begin with." While it's true that some never get saved, like Type A in the parable, or those mentioned in Mt 7:21-23, Type B person does get saved, but does not continue to believe (stay alive spiritually). Therefore, this kind of OSAS answer can't apply here.

By the way, to be Type D person (the one with a good heart that produces a crop from the word of God), you will have to: (1) endure trouble and persecution for godly living; and (2) not allow life's worries, riches, pleasures and desires for other things to choke out its fruitfulness (Mk 4:19; Lk. 8:14).

Lk 8:15 is most clear in describing Type D person, "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." The word *persevering* implies adversity. Paul was an example of this type of person. He faced much adversity (2 Cor 6:4-10; 11:23-27; etc.), but still remained faithful to God.