

The Parable of The Sower  
The Gracious Gifts of Exposure, Hearing,  
Understanding and Faith  
and  
The Paths To Eternal Life or Eternal Death

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God's Sovereign Decree  
from Eternity  
[Mt 25:34](#) [Eph 1:4](#) [Rev 13:8](#) [Rev 17:8](#) [Rom 9:11](#)  
([1 Tim 5:21](#))

Exposure to the  
Gospel?  
Yes  
[Rom 10:14](#)

Hears the Gospel?  
That is, does the person,  
at some level,  
comprehend the Gospel?

Yes  
Scripture uses "hear" not  
only to mean physical  
hearing, but also to  
mean absorbing enough  
information to make a  
decision. This is a gift of  
God. Hearers are thus  
responsible to  
understand, believe and  
obey, not disobey, God.  
[Mt 13:16](#), [Jn 3:16](#), [Jam 2:19](#), [Mt 7:22-23](#)

Understands (συνίημι) the  
Gospel?

A key concept here is  
"understand". Gk συνίημι  
has origin from armies  
coming together to battle.  
Christian truth often seems  
contradictory until "put  
together" - understood. This  
is a work of the Holy Spirit,  
but not, itself, regeneration.

Not Applicable  
Just as a small child may  
trust its mother without  
understanding, so God gives  
some people trust (faith)  
prior to understanding.  
[Judges 13:7](#), [Ps 22:9](#), [Lk 1:41,44](#), [Mk 10:14](#)

Believes the Gospel?

A key concept here is "faith"  
(Gk πίστις, noun form) or  
"believe" (Gk πιστεύω, verb  
form). This is the same  
concept in either noun or  
verb form. "Believe" is not  
synonymous with "Elect" in  
Scripture. Scripture  
recognizes different kinds of  
belief; not all of them are  
saving faith.

Yes  
These have true, living,  
saving faith as evidenced by  
increasing sanctification and  
good works.  
[Jn 3:16](#), [Eph 2:8-10](#)

Rooted in Christ, the Vine?  
[Jn 15:1-17](#)

This is a relationship with the full  
Trinity.  
[Gal 5:22-25](#), [1Jn 2:23](#)

Yes  
Only in union with Christ can the  
believer bear fruit of the Spirit.  
[Jn 15:4-5](#), [Gal 5:22-24](#)

Parable of the Sower  
[Mt 13:1-23](#), [Mk 4:3-20](#), [Lk 8:4-15](#)

Good Soil  
Hears, understands, believes, bears  
Fruit of the Spirit, holds fast to the  
Word, perseveres, has changed, honest,  
good heart.  
[Mt 13:8,23](#), [Lk 8:8,15](#), [Mk 4:8,20](#), [Jn 3:16](#), [Jn 15:1-10](#), [Ro 7:4](#), [Eph 2:8-10](#),  
[Ez 11:19](#)

Rocky Soil  
Hears, believes, but has no root (vine),  
does not persevere.  
[Mt 13:5-6,20-21](#), [Mk 4:5-6,16-17](#), [Lk 8:6,13](#), [Ps 78:34-37](#), [Ez 33:31-32](#), [Mt 7:21-27](#), [Jn 6:70](#), [Jn 15:5-6](#), [1Jn 2:19](#),  
[Job 27:8-10](#), [Heb 10:38](#)

Thorny Soil  
Hears, but idolatry (cares, riches &  
pleasures of world wrongly valued)  
causes unfruitfulness.  
[Mt 13:7,22](#), [Mk 4:7,18-19](#), [Lk 8:7,14](#),  
[Mk 10:23-27](#), [Lk 12:15](#), [1Tim 6:9-10](#),  
[2Pet 2:14-15](#), [1Jn 2:15-17](#), [Ex 20:3,17](#),  
[1Jn 2:19](#), [Job 27:8-10](#), [Heb 10:38](#)

Hard Soil (Path)  
Hears, but does not understand or  
believe. Word snatched away from  
heart.  
[Mt 13:4,19](#), [Is 6:9-10](#), [Mk 4:4,15](#), [Lk 8:5,12](#), [Jn 12:39-40](#), [Rom 11:8](#)

Not Addressed  
Those never exposed to the Gospel are  
not addressed by this parable.



The final  
destination of  
all those in  
Christ is to  
spend eternity  
with God in  
Heaven.  
[Rev 21:3-7](#),  
[Rev 22:1-2](#)



Elect  
Unregenerate & Enlightened  
Unregenerate & Ignorant

No  
Some will never be  
physically exposed to  
the gospel - they are  
yet without excuse.  
[Rom 1:20](#), [2:1,15](#)

No  
"In one ear and out the  
other." Does not absorb  
any information.  
[Mt 13:13-15](#)

No  
The Word is not retained  
long enough for  
understanding, the Word is  
not understood, the devil  
snatches the Word away,  
and other failure modes.  
[Mk 4:15](#), [Mt 13:19](#)

Yes  
Some believe, but their belief  
does not reach deep into the  
heart.  
[Jn 6:66](#), [Jam 2:26](#)

No  
Such people may or may not  
believe in God, may believe  
in a false "gospel", etc. They  
think the Gospel is not true.  
[Jn 3:18](#), [Mk 16:16](#), [2Thess 2:12](#)

No  
Such a one has some level of belief and  
even partakes of spiritual blessings. But  
these do not abide (remain) in Christ.  
[Jn 15:4, 6](#), [1Jn 2:19](#), [Heb 10:26-31](#), [2Pet 2:22](#)

No  
Some choose to disbelieve in spite of  
knowledge and understanding, often  
preferring their idols to Christ.  
[Mt 19:16-22](#)

Note: It is clear in [Lk 8:13](#) that those  
who are Rocky Soil believe for awhile.  
But Thorny Soil either rejects the  
gospel right away ([Mt 19:16-22](#)) or  
else believes the gospel for a time, then  
falls away ([Ac 5:1-10](#)), both from  
idolatry.

No  
No relationship to Christ.  
[Jn 3:18](#)

No  
No relationship to Christ.  
[Jn 3:18](#)

Maybe?  
Like demons, some believe  
God exists and perhaps even  
believe the Gospel is true, but  
hate God and are repelled by  
Christ.  
[Job 1:6](#), [Jam 2:19](#), [Mt 28:11-15](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE:  
The Parable of the Sower and this commentary are with respect to *final results*. Some will initially reject the Gospel, live as hypocrites, etc., before repenting and believing in Jesus Christ. Others, as shown above, have some spirituality for a time, but will have never had a part in Christ.  
[Ez 18:21-24](#), [Mk 15:31-32](#) & [Lk 23:39-43](#)

N.B.: All of these people, from those who have never been physically exposed to the Gospel to the most enlightened and learned, are in the visible church along with elect believers! While attendance at church may give exposure to the Gospel, church attendance, membership or activity, however useful, are simply not part of of justification.

This does not mean that the various true branches of the visible church are useless! They afford an opportunity to hear the Gospel and are a source of great grace to believers. God commands worship assemblies and delegates His authority to church elders. [Heb 10:24:25](#), [Mt 18:15-20](#), [1Tim 5:17](#)

It must be understood that many in the visible church are not what they outwardly appear. Also, many who are in the visible church will come to understanding and saving faith after a time of hypocrisy, delusion, etc.

Q: Do good works save?  
A: NO!!  
God commands good works. But, the Bible often speaks of works (good and bad) because they are *evidence* of what is in the heart and of one's relationship to, or against, Christ.  
Also, just as electricity in a light bulb *must* produce both heat and light by fundamental natural law, so true saving faith *must* produce *both* justification *and* good works.  
[Eph 2:8-10](#), [Rom 8:9](#), [Gal 5:22](#)

Q: Hey dummy! Why did you reverse the order here? The Gospels start with the path and end with the good soil.  
A: Because Heaven is higher than Hell and I did not want my lines to cross.

Note on [Heb 10:29](#) - "justified" does not appear in this passage. Justification follows election and cannot be undone! But, just as a freshly cut branch is still green, it may take time for the final state to be manifest.