

“OF SEEDS AND WEEDS”

A seed is a remarkable part of Creation. A seed can be as small as a sesame seed or as large as an apricot or larger. A seed has its own food supply, that is why we grind them to make food for ourselves. The seed has a command center that tells the seed when to germinate after measuring the temperature and moisture of the soil. In addition, the seed has DNA which determines what the plant will look like, what its fruit will be like and how long the plant can live before dying.

Seeds can be very expensive. The extreme example of this was the Dutch Tulip Bulb Mania in 1637. One especially prized tulip bulb was sold for 12 acres of farmland. Other bulbs sold for ten times what a skilled craftsman made in a year.

Seed is relatively expensive today. Wheat seed sells for approximately ten dollars a bushel. I don't know how many bushels it takes to plant an acre. You can see that to plant a hundred acres of wheat, the cost of seed would be in the thousands of dollars.

Seed is a very competitive industry. When you drive through farm country you often see signs in the field announcing what seed variety developed by what agricultural company is growing in that field. A corn field might have a sign saying “DeKalb 681.” If the corn is growing well the company hopes that other farmers will buy DeKalb 681 next year. Two very important factors for seed selection is disease resistance and yield. Farmers driving by that field can see how that seed compares to the seed that they are using.

A seed contains the spark of life, without which it cannot germinate.

1.) And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29 NKJV)

In this parable Jesus emphasizes how the growing process is out of the hand of man. The farmer does all he can to improve and enhance the soil into which the seed is planted. The farmer may irrigate the soil, attack the weeds that could choke the growing plant and rob it of moisture and nutrients. After that the mysterious process of life is out of the farmer's hands. Only God can transform the seed into a plant, only God can determine if the plant will bear fruit.

One time Lorraine planted a row of lima beans. I built a lattice for them to climb on. The plants grew over the top of the lattices. They were covered with big flowers. Some woman said to Lorraine, "You may as well pick the blooms, dip them in egg, and fry them. They will never make beans." She was right. We didn't get any lima beans.

When Joseph was in Egypt, there were seven good years of bountiful harvests and seven poor years when there were little or no harvests. What made the difference? In another part of the Old Testament, God told His people that because they had disobeyed, they would plant ten bushels and reap only one.

Only God can turn seeds into plants and cause plants to produce the food that we need. Unless we, as a nation, return again to obedience and dependence on God, our fruitful plains and fertile fields may begin to yield less and less food until once again we cry in sincerity, "Give us this day our daily bread...."

2.) Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? "It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; "but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade." (Mark 4:30-32 NKJV)

The various varieties of mustard which we know are in the same family as cabbage, cauliflower, turnips, and rapeseed. Mustard seed is finding a new use as biodiesel. After the oil is pressed out of the seeds, the residue is a highly effective pesticide. It is not known what plant Jesus meant. His listeners understood Him. The word He used is the Greek word now used for the botanical family of mustard plants. There is no known mustard plant that fits the description Jesus gives.

It is sufficient to know that there was a plant with a tiny seed which grew to be larger than any other vegetable and had large branches so that birds could rest in its shade. Jesus used this plant to illustrate the kingdom of God.

In explaining some of the other parables about plants, Jesus identified the seed as the Word of God. His listeners would have known that in the Old Testament prophets the symbol of birds on the branches of a tree referred to a king of great power and other princes and nations seeking his protection. Jesus is saying that though the Word of God may seem weak and inconsequential it will conquer mighty kingdoms and establish a great kingdom here on earth – the kingdom of God. I heard of a woman who makes business trips from the U.S.A. to Iran on a regular basis. Everytime she takes ten Farsi New Testaments. She always gives them all away. The Bible is now being sent into Muslim countries by cell phones, internet, satellite television.

3.) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"" (Matthew 13:24-30 NKJV)

A weed is any plant growing in a field that is not wanted. In West Virginia we had two really big gardens. I had ploughed them both with my rototiller and we were planting the two gardens. By the time we got to the back rows of the second garden there were about a hundred tomato plants growing back there. I got out the rototiller and ploughed them under. We didn't want them. They were "volunteers", weeds.

One farmer may want his fields for pasture. He'd be happy for grass to grow in his field. Another farmer wants his field for soy beans. When grass grows in his field, he's not happy about it, they're weeds.

The Bible tells us that God chose us before the foundation of the world. Those who have believed in Jesus Christ are His elect. The field of wheat is those who are believers in Christ. They are chosen by God. An enemy of God sows tares among the wheat. When they appear in the midst of believers in Christ, nonbelievers seem like those who belong to Christ. In the Church, throughout its history, there have been those who seemed at first to be followers of Christ. Afterward, it was seen they were not. In the assembly of believers they do great harm. They teach unBiblical doctrines, they lead God's people into immoral practices. Such people are enemies of Christ and His people.

