



## Does God Waste the Seeds of the Gospel?

**Mark 4:3:** (NASB) *Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;*



As a Christian, we look at Jesus not only as our Lord and Savior, not only as the Ransom given for the sins of the world, but as a great teacher as well. One can spend a lifetime learning from him. One of the unique aspects of Jesus' teaching is the fact that he taught in parables - stories - lots of stories. Stay with us as we will look at one of those stories and see some remarkably clear lessons about life and the challenges of following Christ.



First, here is the story: (Also found in [Mark 4:1-9](#), [Luke 8:4-8](#))

**Matthew 13:3-9:** (NASB) <sup>3</sup>And he spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow; <sup>4</sup>and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. <sup>8</sup>And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. <sup>9</sup>He who has ears, let him hear.

Let's go to an expert on sowing...Farmer DeMint is an 80-year old lifetime tiller of the ground:

 **Sowing Seeds Introduction, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint**

- They would take a handful at a time to sow the wheat.

**Matthew 13:10-17:** (NASB) <sup>10</sup>And the disciples came and said to him, Why do You speak to them in parables? <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered them, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup>For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

There is an obvious separation here between followers and non-followers.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup>In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; <sup>15</sup>For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.'

This is quoted from [Isaiah 6:9-10](#). It appears that Jesus did not want people to understand...why?



<sup>16</sup>But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. <sup>17</sup>For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Jesus is clearly saying that this Isaiah prophecy is coming true! Prophetically the Jewish nation was in a blind state, in a state of expectation. They eventually rejected him.

### Ezekiel gives further proof of the condition of Israel:

Ezekiel 12:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup>Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.

Jesus set a format of teaching in parables, using pictures with which the listeners were familiar. In this case, it was a simple story about farming. Jesus speaks the parables, explains why he teaches in parables, and then actually explains the parable to his disciples. This should give us a lot of insight and give us a model or template for how to understand all of the parables.

### What were the symbols in the story and what did they mean?



Mark 4:14: (NRSV) *The sower sows the word.*

 **Sowing Seeds - Good Seed Yield, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint**

- *One seed produces a lot.*

While the Sower is not defined by Jesus, it seems obvious that he would fit that role very well:

John 6:35-40: (NASB) <sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst. <sup>36</sup>But I said to you that you have seen me, and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup>All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out. <sup>38</sup>For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.

This gives us a sense as to the origin of the seed - it is the word of God, spoken by Jesus.

<sup>39</sup>This is the will of Him who sent me, that of all that He has given me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup>For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I myself will raise him up on the last day.



Jesus is in the position of distributing the word of God and keeping those who follow him.

**Secondarily, this Sower could be anyone who spreads the Gospel:**

Matthew 28:18-20: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.



Jesus gives the responsibility to his followers of continuing to sow the seeds of the Gospel.

Luke 8:11: (NASB) Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

Hebrews 4:11-12: (NRSV) <sup>11</sup>Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs. <sup>12</sup>Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The disobedience is that of the nation of Israel, who lost out on this blessing to sow the seeds of the Gospel. We can learn from those before us and maintain our goodness of ground. This is an urgent story. The word of God is able to see through all of the barriers we might put up. It can judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart and is life changing.

 **What it takes to get to heaven, SO4J-TV**

- *For everyone it's different. Holding up to your morals and living your life to be the best that you can.*
- *Be a good person.*
- *Be good, don't get in trouble.*

What does it take to get to heaven? Is getting to heaven "different" for everybody?

Matthew 4:3-4: (NRSV) <sup>3</sup>The tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. <sup>4</sup>But he answered, It is written, One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Jesus was tested at the beginning of his ministry. He was visited by Satan and Jesus teaches us that it is the word of God that supports us. We don't need to be focused on the physical things. So the word of God is big! It has to do with eternity, so we need to be able to grasp that this seed is incredibly important.



**What is Jesus illustrating with the different types of ground?**

First, we have seeds that fell along the road; they were trampled underfoot and the birds came and ate them up.

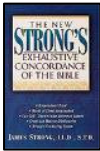
 **Sowing Seeds - Pathway, Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint**

- *It is impossible to get a good crop on ground like this.*



**Matthew 13:19:** (NASB) *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.*

Jesus interprets the parable for us. When someone hears the Gospel and doesn't understand it, it is like sowing seeds on the side of the road. (The birds come and eat the seeds = Satan snatches away what has been sown.)



**Understand:** Strong's #4920 to put together, i.e. (mentally) to comprehend; by implication, to act piously: KJV-- consider, understand, be wise.



**Sowing Seeds - Pathway Birds, Modern Parables - Farmer DeMint**



- *The birds are scavengers and will pick up anything laying around.*

Who is at fault for the lack of understanding of the "pathway people?" Satan is always looking for ways to take the word of God from us. Once he does, we are defenseless!

**1 Peter 5:8:** (NASB) *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

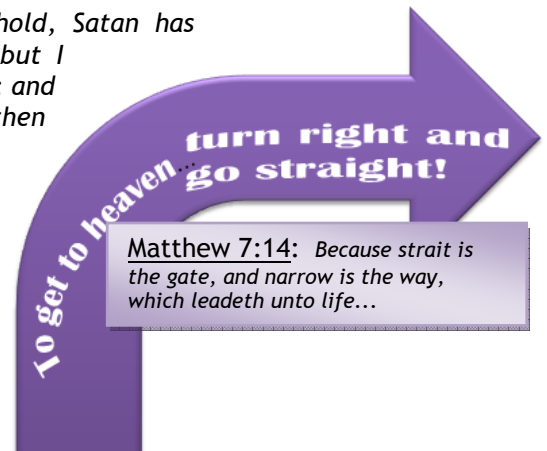
**Satan trying to take Peter:**

**Luke 22:31-32:** (NASB) <sup>31</sup>Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; <sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.



**What it takes to get to heaven, S04J-TV**

- *Be generally a nice, caring person.*
- *Love, don't harm people.*
- *If you believe there is a higher power.*



**Satan trying to take God's Word from Jesus:**

**Matthew 4:5-7:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup>and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you; and on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, on the other hand, it is written, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.



**Observations regarding the path and the birds:**

- The path is not supposed to be a place for planting. (Jesus taught in parables and all did not understand.)
- The seeds left here were trampled - not noticed as of any value. (The value of the Gospel is not even recognized.)
- Those seeds not trampled were eaten by birds. (The scavengers would not allow the seeds to produce a crop.)
- Seeds here had practically NO chance of germination.



- Satan is ALWAYS LOOKING to thwart the Gospel.

### What do YOU think it takes to get to heaven?

Next are seeds that fell on rocky places and immediately sprang up because they had no depth of soil. When the sun rose they were scorched and withered for lack of depth.

Mark 4:16-17: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; <sup>17</sup>and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

In this case, the seed does germinate and begins to grow.

#### Sowing Seeds - Rocky Ground, Modern Parables - Farmer DeMint

- When we sow seed on an area with shallow soil, it dries out so quickly the plant cannot mature...we have a stunted plant that bears no fruit, with no resistance to adverse conditions and it dies.

James 1:21-24: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

The word is implanted, but there is still more to do.

<sup>22</sup>But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

If we are going to be good ground for the seeds of the Gospel, we need to continually assess ourselves. Peer pressure, tragedies, or other outside influences can determine if the seed takes root.

#### What it takes to get to Heaven, SO4J-TV

- Keep going to church and pray to God and do the right thing.
- I was raised Lutheran, so they have their own guidelines.



#### Observations regarding the rocky ground:

- Seeds can take root here.
- Seeds DO take root here - quickly. (Because there is not a lot of depth.)
- There is great joy - great emotion - at the receiving of God's word.
- As with any highly emotional experience, it is only temporary.
- Upon being tested for the word's sake, emotional acceptance cannot bear the weight of the trial. (When affliction arises because of the word, emotion alone doesn't carry you through.)
- Falling away is inevitable, as the lack of depth becomes evident.
- Don't mistake emotion for spirituality!



## What else could possibly hinder us from protecting and cultivating God's word in our lives?

Next are seeds that fell among the thorns. The thorns came up and choked them out and they bore no fruit.



**Mark 4:18-19:** (NASB) <sup>18</sup>And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, <sup>19</sup>but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

### Sowing Seeds - Thorny Ground, *Modern Parables - Farmer DeMint*

- *Plant competition: Weeds compete with our crops. The plants are so close together that they can't get enough sunlight, moisture, or nutrition out of the soil to make a normal growth, so we just get a little spindly plant rather than a big healthy plant.*

The ground is good, but it is preoccupied. Too many things are competing.

**Jesus' message was very consistent regarding his followers attitudes towards earthly things:**

**Matthew 6:19-21:** (NASB) <sup>19</sup>Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup>for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

With too many earthly desires in the way, the seeds of the Gospel don't have a chance.

### Five Emotional Cancers, *Stephen Covey*

- *Criticizing, comparing, complaining, competing (for a sense of your own worth) and contending (mean-spirited)*

These five things take away from your focus on other things. These could be some of the things in the thorny ground that move our focus away from the Gospel. The Gospel has a chance to grow there because the ground is good but the other distractions crowd it out.

**Matthew 19:16-24:** (NASB) <sup>16</sup>And someone came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life? <sup>17</sup>And He said to him, Why are you asking me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments. <sup>18</sup>Then he said to him, Which ones? And Jesus said, You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; <sup>19</sup>Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>20</sup>The young man said to him, All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?

Jesus saw the sincerity in this young man but he also saw his earthly attachments. He was doing good things but was focused on his possessions.

<sup>21</sup>Jesus said to him, If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. <sup>22</sup>But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. <sup>23</sup>And Jesus said to His disciples, Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup>Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.



This is a perfect example of thorny ground. He had the right kind of heart (soil), but it was too crowded. He couldn't fit the Gospel in because he was too attached to the other things and not attached enough to spiritual things.

All of this takes courage!!!

 **Courage with Francis Chan - Courage stands strong, BluefishTV**

- *Be happy when someone puts you down for following Jesus.*
- *God gave us a spirit of power, love and self-control.*
- *Even if the entire planet is against you, courage stands strong...even if it stands alone.*



**Observations about the thorny ground:**

- The presence of thorns proves the ability of the soil to produce. (The soil is good because things are growing there.)
- There are three elements that compete with the wheat: worries of the world, deceitful riches and the desire for other things. (These are in direct competition with what Jesus said was important, so this presents a challenge.)
- **None of these other things are fruitful, they are just consuming.** (They aren't producing anything of great significance, they are just consuming the nutrients.)
- The wheat can grow in this environment - though it cannot accomplish its mission.
- Don't mistake acceptance of the word as application of the word...

Jesus taught us to make sure the Gospel has our heart's full attention! Our soil, our hearts, house the Gospel, and it can be crowded out.

1 Timothy 6:10: (NASB) *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

When you focus on the wrong things, you end up with the wrong results. The thorny ground is not a good place for the development of the Gospel. We have to be aware of what else is in our hearts and minds.

**How do we lock ourselves in to being good ground for life?**



Finally, we have seeds that fell on good soil. They grew up and were fruitful - some 30-, 60-, and even 100-fold!

Matthew 13:23: (NASB) *And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.*

There is something dramatically different in this environment.



## Sowing Seeds - Good Ground, *Modern Parables, Farmer DeMint*

- *Deep top soil makes for good growing conditions- it has moisture-holding capacity and is high in nutrients.*



### Observations regarding the good ground:

- You hear in an honest and good heart.
- You understand the word. (The ground is ready.)
- You hold fast to the word - treat it with reverence and apply it to daily life. (The other things aren't crowding it out.)
- NOW spiritual fruit can be developed. (Be that good ground!)

### What it takes to get to heaven, *S04J-TV*

- *By doing good, as long as you follow the Bible and go to church.*
- *If you are a Christian, it is following scriptures in the Bible. If you are Muslim, it is following the Koran. If you are Buddhist, I'm not sure what they believe, then it is reincarnation...?*
- *That's if you believe in heaven. I personally don't believe in heaven myself.*

The seeds of the Gospel have been received (or not received!) in a variety of different fashions.

Why did Jesus speak in parables? (See **Bonus Material in this Full Edition Rewind for more detail.**) There are two different parts of salvation. First there is the call of true Christians and second, what Jesus said was the time when all that are in their graves will come forth - some to a resurrection of life (heavenly) and some to a resurrection of judgment (earthly). That word "judgment" doesn't mean a final sentence, but rather a period of trial. That's why Jesus spoke in parables.

### The uniqueness of true Christianity:

**1 Peter 2:9-12:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>*But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;* <sup>10</sup>*for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* <sup>11</sup>*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.*

To follow after Jesus is a daily challenge and responsibility. That's why the good ground is scarce in the parable.

<sup>2</sup>*Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

You have to keep yourself in that "good soil" category so that in the kingdom, those who saw your example will remember it. They will eventually glorify God.





So is Jesus wasting the seeds of the Gospel? No! He is spreading it out to look for those who will be of a heart and mind to allow the Gospel to grow in their hearts and change their lives. In turn, they can be the ministers of reconciliation described in the verse we just read, serving others in the kingdom.

**The Lighthouse Principal, Finding your Voice, Stephen Covey**

- *Your voice is when your talent and your passion overlaps what the world needs.*

If we have the privilege of being good ground, then we have this responsibility to find our voice in the service for the Gospel. That's what our voice can and ought to be. We can't let it be crowded out.

**1 Corinthians 12:14-18:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.



" True happiness...is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose." - Helen Keller

We are all different, and that is a good thing. However, everybody's voice can promote the Gospel in our lives.

**Romans 8:37-38:** (NASB) <sup>37</sup>But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

We must focus on being the good ground so that the Gospel can develop in us the fruits of the spirit and allow us to be a good witness to others.

**So does God waste the seeds of the gospel?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!**

**And now even more to think about...  
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**





The question of why Jesus taught in a way so people would not understand can be puzzling. Consider the following scriptural reasoning on the matter...let us know what you think!

Why did Jesus teach in parables?

**Perhaps because it was not time for everyone to convert!**

Matthew 13:10-17: (NRSV) <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples came and asked him, Why do you speak to them in parables? <sup>11</sup>He answered, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>13</sup>The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' <sup>14</sup>With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: 'You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. <sup>15</sup>For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn-- and I would heal them.' <sup>16</sup>But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup>Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

1 Timothy 4:10: (KJV) For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.

“Specially” seems to indicate a successful saving of all, but a higher and different reward for some... specifically those who believe.

1 John 2:2: (NIV) He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

If Jesus atoned for the sins of the world, that means he paid the price for them, which means that the world must somehow reap a benefit from that atonement.

John 5:28-29: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, <sup>29</sup>and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

This resurrection of “judgment” is a resurrection to a time of trial rather than a resurrection to a final sentencing as so many interpret this text to mean.

Acts 24:14-15: (NIV) <sup>14</sup>However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, <sup>15</sup>and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Romans 8:16-23: (KJV) <sup>16</sup>The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: <sup>17</sup>And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. <sup>18</sup>For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup>For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

The “creature” here is the “everyone else” who are not called to follow Christ. This is saying that they are waiting for God’s chosen to be made manifest.

<sup>20</sup>For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, <sup>21</sup>Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the



*bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

Follow the reasoning in this next text carefully, as it lays out how all of the damage to the human race that was done by Adam is reconciled through the sacrifice of Jesus. All die in Adam and therefore, all are reconciled by Christ!

**Romans 5:15-19:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>*But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. <sup>16</sup>The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. <sup>17</sup>For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. <sup>19</sup>For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

