

# **Mark**

## **4:26-29**



**By**  
**Willie Martin**

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**W**HILE THIS PARABLE IS NOT LOCATED IN MATTHEW 13, it is like those parables. This parable is only found in the Gospel of Mark and is located just after the parable of "The Seed of the Sower" and just before the parable of the "Mustard Seed." Mark did not record all the parables in Matthew 13 but stated: "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it." (Mark 4:33)

Mark admittedly did not record all the parables, but in the case of the parable of "The Full Corn," he was the only Gospel writer who recorded it. This parable is different from the first group of kingdom parables of Matthew 13 and is likened unto the parable of "The Hidden Treasure." This parable is about the hidden growth of the Kingdom of God (Israel). The Parable: Casting Seed: "And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground." (Mark 4:26) The parable is readily identified as a kingdom parable by the introduction, "So is the kingdom of God." The man doing the sowing is God; the seed being sown is identified in verse 28 as corn.

The prophet Amos likened corn to the nation of Israel: "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." (Amos 9:9) Israel was sown (scattered) (Deuteronomy 4:26-31; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1) as corn is sifted in a sieve. The analogy of corn to Israel seems quite plain.

It is generally agreed that the Book of Hosea mainly concerns prophecies about the House of Israel. Therefore, it should follow that the verses contained therein pertain to Israel. The Book of Hosea contains the following passages: "And the earth shall hear the corn (Israel), and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel (God sows or God the sower). And I will sow her (Israel) unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy

upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Hosea 2:22-23; See also Zechariah 13:9; Romans 9:25-26; 1 Peter 2:10) Hosea then goes on to say: "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." (Hosea 14:7)

In reference to corn in Hosea, Wilson's Dictionary of the Bible Types states:

- 1). Hosea 2:22 (b) The figure here describes the blessings that will come to Palestine when Israel is fully restored as a nation.
- 2). Hosea 14:7 (a) As the grain comes up freshly in the spring so Israel will again grow as a thriving nation. (Wilson's Dictionary of Bible Types, pp. 121-122)

Wilson recognizes the significance of Israel in both passages. In Hosea 14:7 he readily makes the reference to Israel as being corn but in Hosea 2:22 he makes reference to the land in addition to the nation of Israel. Bullinger, commenting on "I will sow her" in Hosea 2:23, stated: "I will sow her: i.e. the new Israel." (The Companion Bible, p. 1211)

Of course, the sowing Bullinger is referring to is the sowing of the corn which is Israel. Lamsa comments on Hosea, chapter 2, verse 23 as follows: "The reference is to the remnant of Israel. The people who had been rejected and called 'not God's people' were to be called 'God's people' again. Sow also means to 'scatter.' In Aramaic it is often said, 'I will sow them like seed.' This is because the precious seed which is carefully kept in bags is scattered upon the ground. Israel was scattered, but the remnant was to be gathered again and multiplied and established in Palestine (Zechariah 10:2; 13:9)." (Old Testament Light, p. 868)

A reference to a "handful of corn" upon the earth appears in the Book of Psalms: "There shall be an handful of corn (Israel) in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they

of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." (**Psalm 72:16**) In reference to corn in Psalm 72:16, Wilson's Dictionary of Bible Types states: "Probably this represents the great blessing that shall come upon Israel and which will radiate out to the nations of the earth when God restores His people to be the head of the nations..." (*Wilson's Dictionary of Bible Types*, p. 121)

Lamsa comments on Psalm 72:16 as follows: "The Aramaic reads: 'He shall multiply like wheat upon the earth; his seed (offspring) shall spring up on the mountain tops, as on Lebanon...!' The reference here is to the remnant of Israel and the establishment of the messianic reign throughout the world (verses 7-11)." (*Old Testament Light*, p. 502)

Scofield records in his notes on the 72nd Psalm: "The Psalm as a whole forms a complete vision of Messiah's kingdom so far as the OT revelation extended—Verse 16 hints at the means by which universal blessing is to be brought in. Converted Israel will be the 'handful of corn' as the king Himself in death and resurrection was the single grain, the 'corn of wheat.'" (*The Scofield Reference Bible*, note 1, p. 633)

The reference Scofield made to "corn of wheat" is found in the book of John: "...The hour is come, that the son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 2:23-24)

Here Christ was explaining that He must die before He would be able to bring forth much fruit (the firstfruits), Christ being the first fruit (corn of wheat) and Israel the firstfruits (from the sifted corn).

Silent Growth: "And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mark 4:27-28) This is a simple analogy to the growth of corn and the reviving of the kingdom of God (Israel). Adam Clarke vividly describes the reviving of corn as follows: "The justness of and beauty of this metaphor is not generally perceived. After the corn has been a short time above the earth, in a single spike, the blades begin to separate, and

the stalk to spring out of the canter. The side leaves turn back to make way for the protruding stalk; and fall bending down to the earth, assuming a withered appearance, though still attached to the plant.

To look at the corn in this state, no one, unacquainted with the circumstance, could entertain any sanguine hope of a copious harvest. In a short time other leaves spring out; the former freshen, and begin to stand erect; and the whole seems to revive from a vegetative death. This is the circumstance to which the prophet refers; 'they shall revive as the corn.' Of this a prudent and profitable use may be made." (Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 654)

The analogy seems quite clear as it pertains to Israel. Israel was scattered as seed among the nations and appears withered and dead. However, Israel has begun to "freshen and--stand erect; and the whole" is "revive(ing) from a vegetative death."

The Harvest: "But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." (Mark 4:29) Christ talked about the "time of the harvest" in the parable of "The Two Seeds Sown" (Matthew 13:24-30) and there are several references to the sickle being the instrument used to gather the harvest such as in Revelation, chapter 14, verses 14-19.

Conclusion: This is another parable which describes the growth of the kingdom of God (Israel). The parable shows that the kingdom of God is the nation of Israel in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed. The man in the parable is God who sowed or scattered the seed of Israel in the world. Israel appears lost to most people but the seed of Israel is growing and most people "knoweth not how." Israel is growing and maturing into ripe fruit being made ready for the coming harvest.



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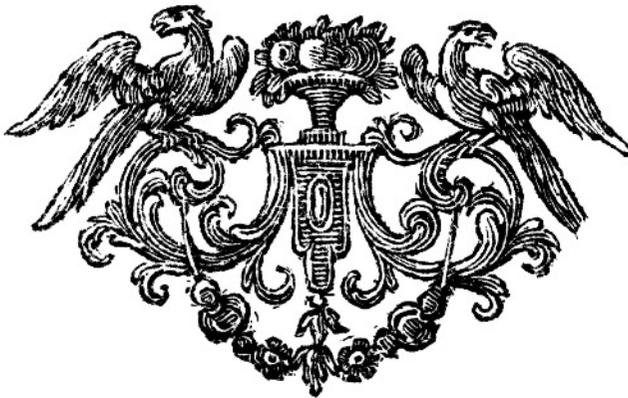
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