

# HOW ARE OUR ROOTS?

## JESUS PARABLE OF THE SOWER

*Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow seed. As he was scattering the seed . . . some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. .. Listen then to what the parable of the sower means . . . what was sown on rocky places is the man who hears the word (about the kingdom) and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away'" Matthew 13:3-6,18-21.*

Jesus tells this story of a farmer sowing seed in his land as a picture for us of spiritual truth. The ground, He says, is the hearts of people (Luke 8:12,15); the seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11); the Sower is Jesus, Himself (Matthew 13:37). The seed that fell on the rocky ground withered and died because it had no roots. Jesus emphasised in this parable the importance of our spiritual roots in God.

Every truth in the Word of God is like a seed. When we hear the Word it is very important that it goes deep into our hearts and becomes rooted in our lives. The depth of the planting is based on the openness of our heart. If our heart is not fully open, then there is only a shallow planting, which is easily rooted out by the Enemy, Satan (Matthew 13:19).

### The Condition of the Branches Depends on the Roots

The growth and branches of a plant will only be as healthy as its roots are strong and deep.

" . . . and if the root be holy, the branches are too . . . Remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you" Romans 11:16,18 (NASB).

There is a parable in the Old Testament about a magnificent cedar tree:

"So it was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches: for its roots extended to many waters" Ezekiel 31:7 (NASB).

The reason it was such a magnificent tree was because its roots went deep down and reached "many waters." The beauty that was evident above the ground was the result of the unseen roots beneath.

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So it is with us as Christians. We are not to focus our attention on trying to fix up our "branches" - that is, trying to be good Christians, or to live like Jesus by our own efforts; rather, our focus should be on our "roots," allowing the truths of the Word of God to be deeply planted in our hearts and to become a reality in our experience. If our roots in God are strong and healthy our outward lives will automatically show the life and nature of Christ to those around us.

*Jesus said: "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" John 15:4-5.*

## Christians Pictured as Trees

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" Jeremiah 17:7-8.

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in Him'" Psalm 92:12-15 (see also 1:3).

### ***A Palm Tree***

A palm tree can grow in the most desert-like conditions. In drought everything around it will dry up and die, but the palm tree will continue to grow in freshness. This is because it has a long tap-root that goes deep into the ground and finds the water beneath. As Christians, we too continue to grow in the Lord and "flourish like the palm tree" no matter what the outward circumstances may be like. The roots of our lives are in the Living Water - Jesus (John 4:7-14).

### ***A Cedar Tree***

The cedars of Lebanon were known for their strength and beauty. It was these trees that Solomon used to build the Temple (see 2 Chronicles 2). The physical Temple of the Old Testament is a picture of the spiritual Temple that God is building today. The House of God is not being built with bricks or wood anymore (see Acts 7:48). Christians are now the "living stones" or "cedars" that God is using to build His Temple.

"In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives