

Parables

Explanation

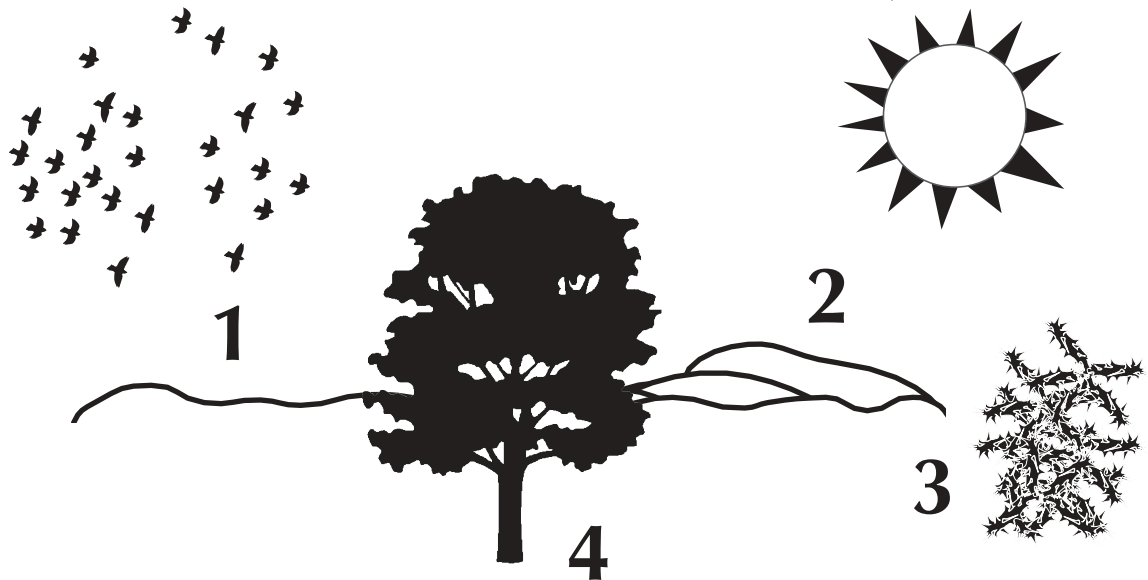
Jesus was a masterful teacher who often used parables to convey different levels of meaning to audiences with different levels of faith or understanding. See chart 7-7 for a full list of the parables. On two occasions reported in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus took his disciples aside and told them the deeper meaning of his parables, for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. Chart 9-6 illustrates the explanation he gave of the parable of the sower, and chart 9-7 shows the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the tares, both found in Matthew 13. The Prophet Joseph Smith affirmed that Jesus actually explained the symbolic meaning behind each of his parables: “The parables were all plainly elucidated” by Jesus to his disciples. Chart 9-8 displays the explanations given by Joseph Smith of the meanings behind the other parables in Matthew 13.

References

- Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 98–102.
- V. George Shillington, ed., *Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997).

Parable of the Sower

Recorded in the Book of Matthew



Symbol

Jesus' Interpretation

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| 1 | Seeds by the wayside (13:4) | “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not” (13:19) |
| | Fowls which come and devour (13:4) | “wicked one ... catcheth away that which was sown in his heart” (13:19) |
| 2 | Seeds in stony places with no root (13:5) | “he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself” (13:20–21) |
| | Sun which scorches seeds (13:6) | “tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, and by and by he is offended” (13:21) |
| 3 | Seeds among thorns (13:7) | “he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (13:22) |
| 4 | Seeds in good ground (13:8) | “he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (13:23) |