

# SEED TIME AND HARVEST

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#### INTRODUCTION

There is probably no more fundamental concept in all of Christianity than seed time and harvest, also called sowing and reaping. It appears in chapter one of *Genesis*, the book of beginnings, and continues throughout the entire Bible until the end. It seems to be elementary; yet few people master the use of it. It can be used by children with no spiritual training or education, but also by the most developed biblical scholar. You even use it whether you know it or not. It is deceptive in its simplicity because people think they understand it, when in reality you could spend a lifetime trying to learn and understand it and still not be proficient in its use. Christian literature is absolutely filled with books on this topic, but most of Christianity is actually ignorant about what seed time and harvest really is and how to use it. *Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*. Familiarity can be a weapon of the enemy in this arena, because it blinds us to the truth that we think we know, but really do not. I would recommend you to begin this study with a prayer for God; to open your eyes to that which you cannot see and to reveal truths to you that have been hidden.

Mankind exists in two realms: the natural or carnal realm, which is actually the created order, created by God and described in the book of *Genesis*; and the spirit realm, which is where God the Father resides. The spirit realm is the higher order of existence; it is eternal and everything in the created order originated in and from the spirit realm. Look at *Gen 1:1-2:* In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. In order to create something in the natural or carnal realm, something had to be transmitted from the higher realm (the spiritual and eternal realm) to the lower (natural and temporal realm). That something was the word of God. <u>God's word was the seed</u> from the spirit realm that created the natural realm, or what we will call the created order.

Seed time and harvest, or sowing and reaping, is the system God uses to create, and to exchange things with mankind. God does everything using the process of seed time and harvest. In the natural world we live in today, we live under a monetary system, where money is the medium of exchange, with relative values of things based on the monetary amount of money attached to it. Seed time and harvest is the exchange system God uses in which the *medium of exchange is seed*. The relative values of seed in God's system of exchange are based on what God said they are, with the highest value being assigned to God's word (who cannot lie) and the lowest value assigned to the word of satan (who is a liar and the father of lies, and the truth is not in him). As an example, God has little use for money, so it is not valued highly in his system. On the other hand, according to **Phil 2:5-11** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also exalted him, and given him a name which is above every other name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and

things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So God highly valued humility, obedience, and submission to his word and his will, and as a result he gave Jesus the name above every other name. So the relative values of humility, submission and obedience are obviously much greater and more valuable to God than money. Also, the seeds of humility, submission and obedience birth a *harvest* of being elevated in position by God. This idea of the relative values of seed, based on how God values them and not what man thinks the value of the seed is, is key to understanding how to use sowing and reaping to get from God the things we desire. The Bible sets forth relative values for many different seeds, but not all possible seeds; almost anything can be a seed in its application. The idea is that we can begin to see how God thinks by studying his word, and we can begin to renew our mind to how he thinks. The objective is that as we begin to think like he thinks, begin to desire what he desires, so that Christ begins to be formed in us, eventually we will come to the realization that God's desire for every man is that Christ be formed in him, and that he will arise to the stature of the fullness of Christ in him, the hope of glory.

The natural or carnal realm where man lives was created by seed from the spirit realm, so in many respects it looks like that realm and has many things in common. Moreover, men and women in the created order have an eternal spirit, so they actually are part of both realms at the same time. The concepts of 'seed time and harvest' and 'sowing and reaping' operate in the natural (lower) realm as a reflection of how things work in the spirit (higher) realm. This reflects the creative power of God instilled in the

natural realm so that this realm could grow, thrive and reproduce itself. Man, as a part of the created order, uses seed time and harvest in that order, whether or not he chooses to. It is just part of the composition of the natural realm. Because man has a dual nature, he can sow and reap, or use seedtime and harvest principles, *in both realms*:

What God gave to man that he did not give to the rest of the created order was the right to *choose* to use seedtime and harvest principles on his own behalf to birth, change or terminate what he desired to birth, change or terminate. The principles of seed time and harvest apply to man and his environment whether or not he chooses to use them; but the *right of choice to use those principles as a means of exercising the dominion God gave to man was a gift to man alone*. That leads to one of the most extraordinary gifts God gave to man to empower him to prosper in every arena: the power make choices and to choose to make an irrevocable decision. We will leave this idea now, but return to it later because without a fundamental understanding of seed time and harvest, it is impossible to properly value this gift. The irrevocable choice to pursue something in the realm of the spirit is a powerful seed of great value to God, and it can change things for you in the natural realm.

In *Genesis* chapter 1 we see God creating or making the created order. All through that chapter we see God speaking (sowing) his word over something that does not yet exist, and it becomes something that does exist. *Heb 11:3* Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. God's word is released as a seed,

mixed with his faith, into creation, and creation becomes what God said for it to become. Look at John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made: and John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. What we see is God creating with the seed of his Word and his faith, sown into the thing he desires to create, and creation takes place; so the word of God mixed with faith is a creative force. Now look at Gen 1:26-29 And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you is shall be for meat. So then man was made in the image and likeness of God; he was given dominion over all the created order, and seed for his provision and creative activities.

Let's look at these verses again: *Heb 11:3* Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of

things which do appear. God's word is released as a seed, mixed with his faith, into creation, and creation becomes what God said for it to become. Look at *John 1:1-3* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made: *John 1:14* And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth, and Col 1:16-17 For by him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. It is clear from these passages that God created all things by the seed of his word, with the release of his faith, and that all things consist of his word. That means that everything will respond to God's word when it is mixed with faith; everything originated from the seed of God's word, and God's word is working all the time to hold it together.

One of the key characteristics of seed time and harvest is that the seed contains all of the elements of the harvest, just in seed form. The DNA of the seed will be found in the harvest on that seed. For instance, a tributary of a river contains everything the river contains, just not all of the river. The water or the composition of the tributary has the same DNA as the river, just in a different container. This principle is fundamental to an understanding of seed time and harvest and to an understanding of God. Looking at *John 1:1-3* again, the DNA of God was put into man, but only so much of him as could be contained in a human body. The DNA of God was also put into the created order,

which in many respects mirrors the spirit realm (albeit an imperfect image), but only so much of that realm as can be contained in the confines of creation. The DNA of God was put into the first man (the first Adam) through deposit of God's seed (word) into him. The DNA of God was deposited into his spirit, soul and body. Man gave his spirit nature over to satan, so the seed of sin was planted in the spirit of man. Since the spirit is the higher order of existence, the soul and body of man, although retaining the DNA deposit of God, became subject to the dominion of sin and the law of sin and death. That seed of sin (and the dominion of it and subjection to the law of sin and death) was passed down through all mankind until Jesus Christ came, born of the seed of God in the body of a woman. Once again the seed of God had dominion in the spirit, soul and body of one man (the man Jesus Christ, who was fully God and fully man, and who is the last Adam), who then regained the authority given to satan by the first Adam and gave it back to all mankind as a choice. Men now have the choice to accept the seed of God, the DNA of God, into their spirit man and become subject to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus instead of the law of sin and death. Once they choose to accept the seed of God into their spirit, which is done by Rom 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, with the mouth confession is made unto salvation: they have the right to choose to renew their mind (soul) to the DNA (word) of God. When the mind is renewed to the DNA of God, the body will likewise be renewed because *Pr 23:7* As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. God's desire for every man is that he choose the spirit of life, and that the spirit of life be used to renew his mind and body so that Christ is fully

formed in him. That is God's goal for every man, that Christ would be fully formed in him. Understanding that this is God's goal for every man is a key to understanding how to make an exchange with God for the things you are believing for. Seed time and harvest is a system of exchange, and the medium of exchange is the seed. God does everything by exchange using the process of seed time and harvest

Man alone in the created order was given the right to use seed time and harvest Mt 6:25-26 Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? He is saying here that the birds cannot use sowing and reaping, seed time and harvest, yet they are provided for by God. Only man has the right to use seed time and harvest, sowing and reaping, and it is because only man was created in the image and likeness of God. Because seed time and harvest operates in the created order, it will work in the created order without any special intervention by God, because the DNA of it is in the natural realm and it mirrors the spiritual realm. For example, there are unsaved farmers who plant seed for crops and grow harvests from those seeds every year. They are exercising seed time harvest principles in the natural realm without any supernatural intervention from God. It is also true that since the natural realm was created from the spiritual realm, the DNA of the spirit realm is in the natural realm and the laws of the spirit realm will govern the operation of the natural realm without any intervention from God at all. Take healing, for instance, which is a spiritual force. The

human body has the capacity to heal itself from many different infirmities, and it will do so without the supernatural intervention by God (or man). Man can intervene in the healing process with the wisdom and knowledge of men concerning it, or men can intervene as the agent of God in the healing process, or God himself can intervene. All of these interventions are seeds to healing: some are natural, some are a combination of the natural and spiritual, some are just spiritual, but all are seeds and the use of seedtime and harvest principles.

Just so we are clear on what was said above, when God originally created man, his intent and desire was that the human body contain everything necessary to heal and renew itself from every form of disease and decay. There were seeds of disease and decay that existed at that time, because satan was present in the garden, but man was enabled, through the dominate presence of the Spirit of God and the spiritual force of healing that was man's portion, to heal himself. As the presence of sin (and therefore sickness, disease and decay) eventually grew in the earth by the process of seed time and harvest (after Adam and before Jesus Christ all men sowed to it) sin and all the manifestations of sin (including sickness, disease, decay) became dominate and at some point the human body lost its ability to defeat the spiritual force of sin that came against it, because the law of sin and death became the dominate law that men were subject to. It was not until Christ came and empowered man in his spirit to use the spiritual force of healing that man once again became capable of being healed by choosing to accept the healing power of God.

In Gen 8:22 God reconfirmed that seed time and harvest would be how things worked in the earth. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. This was part of the covenant that God established with man in the earth. God's word actually is his covenant with man, and it is described in 2 Peter Chapter 1. 2 Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through *lust.* God's word is a series of exceeding great and precious promises that are obtained by the process of seed time and harvest. Every promise requires a seed. There are no free promises in the Bible; every one requires a seed. 2 Pe 1:19 We also have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. The word of God is sure, and if there is a promise in that word, you just have to sow the seed to get the promise. 2 Pe 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. It is the same for every person. The promises of God come by seed time and harvest; no one gets a free pass; every promise will require a seed.

The Bible, then, is a set of promises made by God to man in order to bless man, to give man the desires of his heart and to make him a partaker of the divine nature (the nature of God). The Bible is a written record of God's Covenant with man, or his solemn oath that he would never break. Some of the purposes of it are to let you know what is God's part and what is your part in bringing forth those promises. Bringing forth

the promises of God always requires two parts: your part and God's part. It is important to remember that *you cannot do God's part*, and he *will not do your part*. *Your part is your seed*. The Bible lets me know what is available to me in my covenant with God, what is God like, what does he expect me to be like, and how do all those things fit together. They all work by seed time and harvest. *Mark 4* fills in some of those questions and is a crucial to understanding how seed time and harvest works.

Mark 4:3-32 Hearken; behold, there went out a sower to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see; and not perceive; and that hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And he said unto them, know ye not this parable? And how then will you know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, satan cometh

immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time; afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. And he said unto them, is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? And not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, take heed what you hear: with what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed in the ground, 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. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. And he said, whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when it is sown in the earth, it is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and

becometh greater than all herbs and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

As we have seen, the principles of seed time and harvest operate in both the natural realm and the spirit realm. This is important for man because he lives in the natural realm, and requires harvest in the natural realm to survive. On the other hand, the spirit realm is a higher order of existence and man is a spirit being with an eternal life, destiny and calling, who simultaneously lives in the natural and the spirit realms and requires harvest from the spirit realm as well. When man has come into covenant with God through Jesus Christ, the word of God is the authority of his life, both natural and spiritual, and he was intended to live by that word. Actually, he was intended to live by sowing the word of God and reaping from that word. Jesus Christ, who himself was the word, said in **John 6:63** It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. In the area of seed time and harvest in the natural realm, there are limitations on the ability of the seeds to produce harvests based on the limitations of the realm; the realm of the spirit does not have the same limitations. For example, in the natural realm there are time constraints that do not apply in the spirit realm, and there are distance considerations that do not apply either in the realm of the spirit. Since the spirit realm is the higher realm, and since the DNA of the Spirit of God is in all things, everything in both the natural and the spirit realms will respond to the word of God. Man has the authority and privilege of using the word of God to sow in both realms, and the seed that has the greatest value in God's system is the word of God. It must be mixed with faith, but the word of God and

faith will produce in both the spirit realm and the natural realm. This is critical to man because we live in the natural realm and we have to reap in the natural realm.

Let's take an example of how we reap from the promises of God in the natural realm. We will use healing as an example. The word of God presents healing as a promise of God, as a covenant right. Is 53:3-5 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Healing is a spiritual force, and this passage from the book of Isaiah describes a spiritual force. What Jesus Christ did for me in the area of healing was done in his body but made available to me in the spirit realm, and I have to receive my healing, my promise of healing, in the realm of the spirit. That promise is received in the same manner as all promises of God are received: you believe them in your heart and confess them with your mouth, and you receive them. Rom 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness (healing was a part of the righteousness package); and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (includes healing). In order for me to receive this promise, I have to sow God's words into my heart, I have to sow my faith with those words, so that I come to the place where I believe in my heart the promise, and it is mine, received in my spirit: but I need the spiritual force in my body for my body to be healed. The word of God tells us several ways to get healing from the realm of the spirit to our body; 1. They shall lay hands on

the sick and they shall recover (*Mark 16:18*), 2. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick (*James 5:14-15*), and 3. He sent his word and healed them (*Ps 107:20*). All of those describe a way to get healing from the realm of the spirit to your physical body. I can choose any or all of them. I personally believe it is most effective to get a word from God about which of these methods is for you at the moment, but there is nothing wrong with doing them all. Then if I am not healed, I am going to go to God to find out why, because healing is my covenant right and privilege.

Provision for my needs is a different matter. Provision originates from prosperity, which is a spirit, but provision is a natural event. According to *Mark 4:32*, the process of seed time and harvest works by the seed growing up and becoming greater. That is true in whatever realm you are in. In the example of healing, the covenant promise of being healed that came to me when I got saved and born again was deposited by God as a seed in my spirit. *In order for it to work for me, it has to grow up and become greater on the inside of me. This is probably the principal reason that most people, saved by the blood of Jesus, still are not appropriating the healing power of God in their bodies. The promise belongs to them and they know it; they know they are supposed to be healed, but they are not getting healing: it is because the seed of healing that God deposited in them when they got saved has not grown up and become greater on the inside of them.

That happens by increasing my faith and my meditation on the word. In order to have a harvest of anything you are believing for, you have to have something to start with as a* 

seed so it will grow up and become greater. In the case of natural provision for my needs, both the spirit of prosperity inside me and the seed sown in the natural realm will have to grow up and become greater. In other words, I will require two seeds, one in the spirit realm and one in the natural realm. The seed from the natural realm is what will be increased, but the seed in the spirit realm will determine by how much it gets increased and how fast. Look at *Mark 6:34-44* And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, this is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, shall we go and buy bread two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, how many loaves have ye? Go and see. And when they knew, they say, five, and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

Notice in the first verse quoted, the people were lost, they were unsure where to go or what to do, and they lacked knowledge. Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. The remedy was to teach them the Word of God, which is exactly what Jesus was doing; Mark 4:14 The sower soweth the word. Ps 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The word of God will show up where to go and what to do, so the compassion and wisdom in Jesus responds first with the thing they need, which is the Word of God. The next thing to notice is the response of the disciples in vs 35 and 36. They saw need as well, but their minds went first to lack; or what they did not have. Their comment was that in light of the need these people have and our incapacity to fulfill it, we need to send them away. That is the response of a spirit of lack, and the spirit of the law of sin and death; it looks to what it does not have instead of looking to seed and faith. The spirit of prosperity is nowhere to be seen in the disciples. Jesus' response was for them to give the people something to eat. Notice the disciples next response: we don't have enough money. The immediate response was that they needed money to meet the need of the people. The greater anointing of the power of God is to set the captive free no matter what binds the captive, including provision; but that requires the use of faith and seed. Money is a far lesser anointing for provision because there are things money cannot or will not buy, and generally you will have what you have, so faith is not involved: and we know that according to **Heb 11:6** without faith it is impossible to please God. Jesus then instructs them to go see what kind of seed you have; go inventory your seed. It is clear from the exchange that they had no idea what kind or amount of seed they had to sow.

Let me comment here briefly on money. As we said in the beginning, the system of men in the earth is a monetary system, which uses money as the medium of exchange. God is far above that and uses seed as the medium of exchange in his system, or seed time and harvest. I have found it would be very unusual for God to multiply money alone, even if that is the seed you sowed. God will rarely use the system of men because he wants to develop you in his system, not the system of men. For that reason, if he wants to get money to you, it will be through something that produces money: a business, a property, a job; something that produces money.

Faith is always involved in sowing and reaping and faith is the factor by which the seed is multiplied, but in this case they had no idea even what seed they had. Again this is the response of the spirit of lack and the spirit of the law of sin and death. *The Spirit* of Life finds what seed is available and sows it, trusting in faith to multiply it sufficiently.

Up to this point there has been no input of faith by the disciples at all. The law of the spirit of lack and sin and death looks first to what it does not have; the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus looks first to what seed is available, and then puts its faith and trust in the process God said to use (<u>seed time and harvest, sowing and reaping</u>) and in the Lord of the Harvest <u>to multiply it to the level needed</u>. Notice in **vs 38** and following, that after they reported to Jesus how much seed they had, <u>Jesus never</u> <u>comments on the sufficiency of the seed.</u> Clearly the size of the seed was irrelevant; it did not matter how much seed they had, Jesus had enough faith to multiply it to the level required to meet the needs of the moment.

Seed is what the Lord of the Harvest multiplies: <u>faith determines the factor by which it is multiplied</u>. **Mark 4:32** But when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater. That is how seed works: it grows up and becomes greater. <u>Faith is what determines how much it grows up and how great it becomes.</u> In this passage, the seemingly insignificant seed they started with was multiplied to <u>more than enough because of the faith of Jesus</u>. We are to develop our faith, using the principles for increase and growth set forth above, so that Christ is formed in us in the area of our faith.

There is no more important subject for our Christian growth than seed time and harvest, because it is how God does things, and everything in the kingdom of God operates according to these principles. I encourage you to study and mediate *Mark 4:3-32*. It is an indispensable reference on the operation of seed time and harvest and your use of this system in everything you do will show God you want to develop in his system and want to learn to develop as he desires. God will honor that and the Holy Spirit will see to it that you get developed in this area.

## SEED FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

Gen 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. This verse was a reaffirmation by God that seed time and harvest principles would continue to work as long as there was an earth, or a natural, created order. The natural, or created, order is temporal; the spirit realm is eternal. God's desire and intent for mankind was that the temporal realm (and all things temporal) would be a training ground for spiritual (eternal) situations that would be our future. The process of sowing and reaping in the natural realm would be our teacher to learn how to sow and reap in the spirit realm. The lower order of sowing and reaping would be to sow temporal things in order to reap temporal things, with the higher order being to sow spiritual things in order to reap spiritual things. Gal 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Now God really has no use for things temporal, so the purpose of them was for us, to develop us in spiritual matters. Under God's system of seed time harvest, God's intent was to train you to sow and reap in things spiritual, things eternal. God's ultimate desire for you was not to teach you how to sow for a new car, or to sow for provision, it was to teach you how to bring forth things in the realm of the spirit to accomplish his purposes in you, through you, and for you. He uses the example of the temporal things to teach you about eternal

things. His eternal purpose in you is that you would be like Christ: that Christ would be formed in you, and that you would grow to the fullness of the stature of Christ. To that end you would have to learn to sow to the Spirit so that of the Spirit you would reap life everlasting. The question then would be what is it that I sow? If my desire is to sow into the realm of the spirit, what do I sow? And how do I sow and reap from that realm?

Now look at **1 Cor 15:50-54** Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory, o death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? There is a temporary, carnal nature that is corruptible, but there is also the incorruptible in the spirit realm. What is brought forth in the natural is corruptible, what is brought forth in the spirit is incorruptible. What begins in the natural, progresses to the spiritual: what begins as a seed corruptible in the natural will progress to the spiritual incorruptible. When you take natural seed and put it into the realm of the spirit, it becomes incorruptible and therefore imperishable. A harvest in that realm will yield season after season because it is incorruptible.

Mt 17:14-20 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is

lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and This passage ends with a remarkable statement: nothing shall be impossible fasting. unto you. We notice in this passage that Jesus is healing a demoniac boy by rebuking the devil, so he is speaking the word of God concerning healing and the casting out of devils, and the devil left the boy. He is sowing the word of God into the situation and it produces the harvest desired. When he is questioned about it by the disciples, he reveals that there are seeds the disciples lacked that were required to be sown in order to produce this harvest: faith, prayer and fasting. Not only did they not possess the requisite amounts of the required seed, they did not know what the seeds were. There are some powerful keys in this passage about bringing forth supernatural things. Clearly the disciples had *some* measure of the seeds that Jesus sowed here: they are no doubt accustomed to healing the sick, and obviously they have a measure of faith, prayer and fasting. The real problem here seems to be that they did not know the seed that was required and they must have lacked the requisite level of faith. Notice when they ask Jesus why they could not cast him out, the first part of the response in vs 20: It was

<u>because of your unbelief (lack of faith)</u>. Jesus did not say they would never be able to cast this kind of devil out; he said they could not cast out <u>this one</u> because of their lack of faith.

We see principles in this passage to obtaining the supernatural. The first one is this: You have to know what is the seed required to bring forth the supernatural. Jesus said all things are possible. This one thing is the foundation to bringing forth something supernatural that you desire from God. God does everything by seed time and harvest. If there is something you want from God it will require a seed. There is absolutely nothing you will ever get from God that does not require *some* seed. God has no free gifts. Every one of his promises is available to you but it will require something. Even the free gift of salvation was not free: it was just free to you. Jesus paid an enormous price on your behalf so you did not have to pay for it, but someone else (Jesus) did pay for it. If you do not know what the seed is you cannot sow it. If you are believing God for something supernatural, that only God can do for you, it will require a seed, you will have to know what the seed is, and you will have to sow it. If you are waiting for God to answer and supernaturally respond to something you have requested and you do not know what the seed is, you are not on the road to getting what you desire. You cannot get on the road until you know what the seed is.

Let me add here that we are talking about bringing forth supernatural things, or things that must originate in the spirit. If you spend most of your time in the carnal realm and are not developing yourself in spiritual matters, you will never see supernatural things brought forth. God is more interested in relationship than he is in taking care of things you desire: he takes care of the things you desire so your attention does not have to be on them, but on him. If you are not regularly sowing to spiritual things, you will never reap the supernatural. Reaping from the supernatural is a reward (harvest) that comes about as a result of sowing to the Spirit.

The second principle is this: once you know what the seed is, and you have sown it, it will be the measure of your faith that brings it to pass. In this case, even if the disciples knew what the seeds were, if their faith was insufficient, as Jesus said it was, then they still could not bring forth the harvest <u>until they increased their faith</u>. There is a measure of faith required for bringing forth every promise: little promise, little faith: big promise, big faith: supernatural thing that only God can do, much bigger faith. It seems obvious from the discussion in **vs 20-21** of this passage that great faith can make up for other things that are lacking. It also seems appropriate to say that if you had great faith that was sufficient to overcome this kind of problem, <u>you would be already be sowing</u> the seeds of prayer and fasting. Someone who is routinely sowing to the Spirit out of a <u>desire for relationship with God is going to spend time in prayer and fasting</u>. There is no shortcut to having God do supernatural things for you; it comes from the harvest of seed sown to the Spirit.

The process of seed time and harvest, sowing and reaping, is God's system for making exchanges with mankind for the things mankind desires from him. The medium of exchange under God's system is the seed. In many cases the Bible sets forth what

the seed is for something: for instance, take forgiveness of sins. God is clear on that: the seed for, and the only seed for, forgiveness of your sins, is for you to forgive others. If you do not sow that seed, the one that God designated for this purpose, then you will not get the harvest. Until you sow the seed God designated for this harvest, you will never get it. Notice in **Matthew 9:38**, Jesus is the Lord of the Harvest. This is a key to obtaining the supernatural from God that only God can do: the Lord of the Harvest knows the seed required to bring forth the harvest you are looking for, or he can designate what seed is required for the harvest you are believing for. Now we said that God has no free gifts, that a seed is always required to bring to pass whatever you are asking God for. The reason for this is that God is always about developing his children into the image and likeness of Christ. God's vision for all of his children is that, at maturity, they would look like Christ: Christ would be fully formed in them, and they would have risen to the fullness of the stature of Christ in them. Every one of us has things we need to work on. God uses the development of these issues as seeds for what we are believing for. There have been many times in my personal situations that I desired God to do something supernatural for me that would be impossible in the natural realm, but possible with God. As I began to pray about the situation, God would begin to talk about some seemingly unrelated situation or matter. It was always some kind of character issue that I needed correction or development in, and I finally realized that God was telling me the seed for the thing I was asking him for. I wanted something from him, he wanted something from me. What he wanted from me was the continued development of the Christ in me, and he was saying he would accept development of an issue as the seed for what I was believing for. At that point I had a choice to make: if I

sowed the seed he asked for, I could have the thing I was believing for, and God can do anything. If I did not sow the seed, I would not get it. It was that simple, and I was the one who made the choice of whether or not I received what I was believing for based on whether or not I sowed the seed.

Seeds for supernatural things are not generally difficult to sow, you just have to know what seed God requires, and you have to put your time and attention on it. Many of us have failed to develop in some areas just because we did not put time and attention on it. It is here that most people fail in getting the supernatural. God identifies the seed, but we don't want to sow that seed. We try to bargain with God to sow the seed we want to sow and not the one he has identified. If you do that, you will not get the supernatural harvest you desire. You may not want to sow the seed God has identified, but it is the required seed for what you are believing for. This does require hearing from God about what the seeds are, which in turn requires relationship and fellowship with God to find out what needs to be sowed. Relationship and fellowship with God are desires God has for every one of us, so he is furthering his desire in this area as well.

Many people will ask me as their pastor to pray for or with them about a particular matter, frequently involving seemingly impossible situations. As their pastor, I do what they asked me to do. I have found that God typically will respond to me in the manner that I have identified above concerning some seed he requires from the people that I am praying for. *Most of the time they refuse to sow the seed*. Normally that seed is

easy to sow, and normally it involves a change of mindset, attitude or belief requiring simple changes of behavior that reflect the change of belief, <u>but most of the time they refuse to sow the seed.</u> Generally that is the point we don't see them again and they leave the church. Very few people are willing to allow God to make the changes in them that are required so he can do supernatural things in them, for them, and through them.

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1 Cor 15:36-46 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The author is saying that the seed and the harvest are different. They don't look the same, and you cannot always tell the seed from the harvest, and vice versa. However, there is

a supernatural process applied; corruptible seed is sown, an incorruptible harvest is raised. God is the one who decides what harvest comes from what seed, and we do not have the right to say what seed will produce what harvest. We also so not have the right to say what the seed looks like that will produce the harvest we are looking for. God makes those choices and we are responsible to sow what he said to sow.

There is one other point being made in this verse: the seed you sowed was corruptible; the harvest you get is incorruptible. An incorruptible harvest is imperishable, it never passes away. The fruit of that harvest lives and abides forever.

### SOWING IN FAMINE

Gen 26:1-11 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down unto Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister; for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife, and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, what is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lain with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

The central character in this story is Isaac, who is the son of Abraham and the carrier of the covenant of God in the earth. In Genesis 12:10-20 there was a grievous famine in the days of Abraham and he went down to Egypt to sojourn there during the famine, so it seemed logical for Isaac to go to Egypt as well. However, the Lord appeared to him and instructed him to "dwell in the land that I will tell thee of." Herein we see a powerful principle of God, that he has a specific place for us to be and that it will be our place of protection, provision and blessing. This is always the case, but it is especially true in seasons of famine. We must hear from God concerning the place that he has for us, and then we have to get there. In Genesis 22 we read the story of the testing (or the "proving") of Abraham and see that he is led to a place "which I will tell thee of." In that place, God provides himself a lamb for an offering, and Abraham <u>called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh.</u> Jehovah-Jireh is the Lord God my provision and it is a place. It is a spiritual place of obedience and submission, but it is also a natural place where God has ordained for us to be. His protection, provision and blessing is at that place. If we are to successfully sojourn in famine, we must hear from God concerning the place he has for us to be and then we have to get there. The lamb was provided at a specific place, at a specific point in time and Abraham was required to hear and to obey and to get there to obtain the provision of God for that time. Now I want you to notice the nature of this provision. It was a natural provision that was supernaturally supplied. It *required* the partnership of God *and* man in order to bring the provision to full stature. The provision came to full stature when it met the purposes of God <u>and</u> man. God's part was to supernaturally supply the provision. *Man's part was to* get to the place where the provision was supplied.

Now Isaac is in the place God told him to be but he *is not dwelling as the righteousness of God. He is not living in faith, he is living in fear.* **V.7...** For he feared to say... He is doing what he was told to do, but he is not doing it in faith and confidence. He was not sure he was protected, provided for and supernaturally covered by God, so he is just hanging out, hoping for the famine to be over. In **v.8** we are told ... he had been there a long time... so much time had passed and nothing was really happening. He was not sowing, he was not reaping, he was not increasing and he has a fundamental misunderstanding of what God had for him to do in that place. Time will work against you in a season of famine. It is a mathematical certainty that at some point even the most abundant store of provision will run out if it is not kept supplied with new provision. For that reason you cannot wait out a season of famine, you must be sowing for increase. Just as Isaac saw in this passage, if you do not sow, you do not reap. If you do not reap, at some point you run out.

It is interesting to note that as we read the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, who are the patriarchs of the faith and the carriers and beneficiaries of the covenant of God in the earth in their times, every one of them is severely affected by famine. What God is saying is that even as the righteousness of God in the earth, we will be subject to seasons and famine will be one of them. The clear intent of the Word of God is not to teach us to avoid famine, but to teach us how to go through it and prosper along the way. It cannot be an accident that all of the first four carriers of the Abramic Covenant in the earth went through severe famine and lack, even though they

were exceedingly prosperous men. Prospering in a season of famine is an element of our dominion that God gave us to operate in.

Lets pick up again at **Gen. 26:12....** Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

Between Gen. 26:11 and 26:12 something happened to Isaac to change the dynamic of the situation. Suddenly he gets revelation knowledge that he did not have before and everything changes. He gets a revelation that God supernaturally put me in this place, He is supernaturally taking care of me and protecting me, and that He is with me. Note that nothing changed on the outside, but everything changed on the inside of Isaac. And, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7) .He got a revelation from God in the situation and it changed the way he is thinking. Nothing changed at all on the outside, but everything changes on the inside. Genesis 26:12-14, Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and a great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. Up until that time He was just marking time, enduring the famine and thinking he would just hang out there until the famine was over. However, the instruction of God was to "sojourn in this land..." which means to dwell for a time, not considering it your permanent residence but a temporary place to reside. Now he has revelation that he is supposed to sow and reap, buy and sell and exercise dominion over the place as long as he is there. There is a clear distinction made

between **vs. 6**, "and Isaac dwelt in Gerar.....", and **vs. 3** where the instruction was to "Sojourn in the land ...." Up until this point he is just dwelling there, but when he gets revelation from God he begins to sojourn, and sow seed and take dominion over the land and the position he finds himself in.

Now I want you to notice that until this point there were two famines going on.

First of all, there was a natural famine happening in the earth, but there clearly was a spiritual famine of the Word of God in this place as well. Isaac, the carrier of the covenant of God in the land, is not sowing natural seed, but he no doubt is not sowing the Word of God also. *Mark 4:14* The sower soweth the Word, and then the most fundamental word of all concerning seedtime and harvest, if you don't sow you don't reap. *Ecclesiastes 11:4* He that observeth the wind shall not sow; he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. Isaac is allowing the circumstances to stop him from sowing and as a result the circumstances stop him from reaping. Note that it is not the circumstances that caused him not to reap, it is the fact that he did not sow.

I don't want you to miss what was just said, because it is fundamental to prosperity in any season. *IT WAS NOT THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CAUSED HIM NOT TO REAP, IT WAS THE FACT THAT HE DID NOT SOW.* 

As he begins to sow, he begins to reap and because he is where God told him to be, doing what God told him to, he begins to reap *supernaturally,* because (*v* 12) the Lord blessed him. When you sow, you are going to reap as a natural consequence.

That is Galatians 6:7 ... Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man

begins to increase mightily, and his substance, wealth and reach are evident to the Philistines and they are envious of him. Moreover, he begins to exercise dominion with his wealth. Now his provision is coming to full stature. *Genesis 26:15* For all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. Now the wells were a symbol of prosperity, of wealth and of dominion. Famines in that day were caused by lack of rain, and wells were a way of taking dominion over the famine. They were a visible reminder of the wealth, power and dominion of Abraham and so the Philistines had covered them up. As Isaac begins to redig the wells he is taking again the dominion of his father over the land and it causes fear in Abimelech and the people, and Abimelech asks him to leave because Isaac has become much mightier than the people among whom he dwells. *Genesis 26:16* And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us for thou are much mightier than we.

Genesis 26:17,18 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water, which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. Note the choice of words here. He does not just name the wells, he <u>calls</u> them after the names by which his father <u>called</u> them. The word "call" means several things: to name or to give a name to, to designate or characterize as, to affirm to be, <u>to</u> <u>summon, to arouse or to awaken, to demand.</u> Romans 4:17....God, who quickeneth the

dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Isaac is doing more than just giving the well a name, he is exercising the spiritual principle of calling forth those things that be not as though they are. He is sowing words and creating spiritual forces that go with them.

Isaac has now caught the flow of the supernatural in this. He has caught how God does what he does in this type of situation. God does not change the laws of the natural realm for us, such as the flow of seasons, he has for us to take dominion over them and use them for our benefit. Genesis 8:22 is about seasons..... While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. If God changed the natural law for us, everyone would benefit the same, even those who are outside the covenant with God. By giving us dominion and authority over the natural law, God is creating an advantage for us over those outside the covenant. It is how God sets us apart and above those outside the covenant. More over, we have the right to decide how much apart and how much above we want to be: Mark 4:24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear; with what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given. We are given the option to decide how much of the supernatural we want to walk in. The more we choose to understand how God does what He does, the more we get to use it to our advantage.

Famine is a season just like abundance is a season, and there is a clear message in the Bible concerning famines, and the word is that we will be enduring famines. God wanted us to know that there would be seasons of famine and the objective was not to just endure through famine but to take authority and dominion over it and prosper through it. There were famines in the times of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and all of these men, who were the carriers of the covenant of God in the earth, were affected by and greatly prospered through famine. Something happened to every one of them in famine that would not have happened in a season of abundance. God wanted us to see how he protected and provided for them in seasons of famine, and if he protected and took care of them, He will do the same with us. His objective was to show us that He wanted us to prosper and have dominion even in the most difficult of times, and to show us how to do it.

#### **ADDENDUM**

QUESTION FOR CONSIDERATION:

In **vs 12,** Then Issac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

WHAT WAS IT THAT ISSAC SOWED?

You have to know the answer to this question for yourself, because it leads you to this one: what do I sow?

Here are some elements to meditate on:

- ➤ God loves me. By his divine power he hath given unto me all things that pertain to unto life and godliness through my knowledge of him (2 Pe 1:3).
- ➤ God is not arbitrary. He is Lord; he is authority; he is order; he is love; but he is not arbitrary. He is very specific about how he does things and I have to learn how he does them. He will not make exceptions for me or for anyone else. He will not make changes for me or anyone else.

- > God's word is the source of everything, it was before all things, it is in all things, and by it all things hold together.
- > God wanted me to master seed time and harvest because it is how I get anything from God.
- > God wanted me to know him better. I want me to know him better. He is very lovely and the more I know about him the more I will love him.
- ➤ God is love. I love God, God loves me, and I love others because I love God.

# SEED, TIME AND HARVEST

THERE IS NO MORE FUNDAMENTAL TOOL IN THE ARSENAL OF THE BELIEVER THAN SEED TIME AND HARVEST!

GOD USES THIS TOOL HIMSELF IN EVERYTHING HE DOES, AND HE EXPECTS YOU TO USE IT AS WELL. IN FACT,

VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING WORKS BY THIS PROCESS, SO IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE KNOW HOW TO USE IT! THIS

BOOK IS A STUDY IN THE WAY THAT THIS PROCESS OPERATES AND HOW YOU CAN USE IT TO YOUR BEST

ADVANTAGE IN EVERYTHING YOU DO. IT IS A MUST READ FOR ANYONE WHO IS SERIOUS ABOUT USING GODIS

WAYS AND MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING. GOD IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM, AND
WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND THIS PROCESS AND HOW GOD USES IT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM IN

WAYS YOU DID NOT USE OR UNDERSTAND BEFORE. GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU UNDERTAKE THIS JOURNEY TO

UNDERSTANDING THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PROCESS GOD USES!

