

A photograph of a large-scale construction project at sunset. The building's steel framework is completely encased in a dense network of scaffolding. The sky transitions from a bright orange glow on the left to a deep blue on the right. The overall mood is one of industriousness and the beginning of a new structure.

FOUNDATIONS

of the faith

Matthew 13:1-9 | The Parable of the Sower

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them.

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Matthew 13:1-9 | The Parable of the Sower

⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

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Matthew 13:1-9 | The Parable of the Sower

⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.”

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Matthew 13:18-23 | The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸ "Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ 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 what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy,

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Matthew 13:18-23 | The Parable of the Sower Explained

²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

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Matthew 13:18-23 | The Parable of the Sower Explained

²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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Type of Soil	Result of Contact with Seed	Spiritual Meaning
The path	Birds swooped down—seed taken away immediately	Hear word, but don't understand it—devil steals it away
Rocky ground	No depth of earth—instant growth but no root, therefore scorched by the sun	Initial reception of gospel message, but persecution leads to falling away
Weeds	Seed grew among thorns that choked it	Reception of word compromised by riches and worldly concerns
Tilled ground	Seed took root and there was growth	Word heard, understood and received—spiritual fruit in human life

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Slavery 1619 - 1863

- 1619 - First slaves arrive in America
- 1786 - Richard Allen & Absalom Jones found African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church
- 1804 - Northern states abolish slavery
 - Jim Crow segregation is created in the North
- 1863 - Emancipation Proclamation (American Civil War)

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Slavery 1619 - 1863

- White “liberals” were fighting to end slavery
- Detroit important location on Underground Railroad
- 244 years of slavery and oppression
- The black church is relevant and a champion for black rights

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1863 - 1929 Jim Crow

- Jim Crow: practice of segregating black people from white
- Black folks were primarily monolithic, had much of the same values and experiences and the gospel was spreading
- With a gospel foundation, the black church was socially engaged and doing much community organizing
- White "liberals" were advancing justice causes as well

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1931 - 1964 Civil Rights

- The collective power of blacks gets channeled through a preacher named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Oppression remains
- Federal policies deny rights (housing, financing, safety, employment, etc.)
- King was facing opposition
- The story of Malcolm Little

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1965 - Present Day

- Job growth in the early 70s and 80s
- Middle class whites and blacks left Detroit
- Southfield was 70% black, and Warren in 2000 with 4,000 to 18,000 in 2010.
- Crack epidemic crippled the city

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Weeds that Seek to Choke the Seed

“The Moorish Science Temple of America is an American national and religious organization founded by Noble Drew Ali. His doctrine was also intended to provide African Americans with a sense of identity in the world and to promote civic involvement.” Wikipedia

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Weeds that Seek to Choke the Seed

“Black Hebrew Israelites (also called Black Hebrews, African Hebrew Israelites, and Hebrew Israelites) are groups of African Americans who believe they are descendants of the ancient Israelites. Black Hebrews adhere in varying degrees to the religious beliefs and practices of both Christianity and Judaism." *Wikipedia*

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Weeds that Seek to Choke the Seed

Nation of Islam

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“Again we have deluded ourselves into believing the myth that Capitalism grew and prospered out of the Protestant ethic of hard work and sacrifice. The fact is that capitalism was built on the exploitation and suffering of black slaves and continues to thrive on the exploitation of the poor – both black and white, both here and abroad.”

Martin Luther King Jr., *The Three Evils of Society*, 1967

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2 Timothy 4:2-4

² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

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