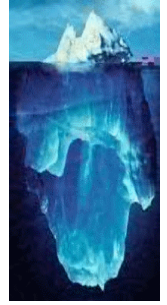


Pardes ~ Paradise
A Journey into the 4 Levels of Biblical Understanding
by Eighth Day Assembly

What is Pardes? *Pardes* [H6508] is a Hebrew word used in the Bible that means a forest, orchard, or park, and is referred to as Paradise. It corresponds with the Greek word *paradeisos* [G3857], which also means a park, Eden, or Paradise. In Hebrew, Pardes is spelled, PRDS which is also an acronym for the Hebrew words Pshat, Remez, Derasha, Sod. Each word represents a different level of understanding the scriptures. Each level of understanding becomes deeper as revealed in the iceberg picture (upper right).



The journey into Pardes also represents our journey into deeper levels of intimacy with God our Father. It represents our journey into the relationship we once had in the Garden of Eden, hence the word Pardes ~ Paradise. (When finished here, please see our article on [4 Entered the Garden](#) - a story from the Jewish Talmud on the dangers of the journey into Pardes.)

The four levels of Biblical understanding are:

P [Pshat] - *literal, simple* - BREADTH
R [Remez] - *parable, allegory* - LENGTH
D [Derasha] - *seek, search* - DEPTH
S [Sod] - *inner, mystical* - HEIGHT

DIMENSIONS

Jewish mysticism teaches us that the four levels of Biblical understanding are actually dimensions of meaning or interpretation. These dimensions as seen in the New Testament are the measurements of BREADTH, LENGTH, DEPTH, and HEIGHT, as revealed in Ephesians 3:18.....

Ephesians 3:17-19 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

In verse 18, the word *comprehend* [G2638/ G2596/ G2983] means to find, obtain, or perceive "down" in opposition, position or intensity. It's to seek, search out, look at, and obtain what is *beneath* the surface of the scriptures, as in the iceberg.

The apostle Paul was encouraging every one of us to come to know by seeking out for our own possession, what is the breadth, length, depth, and height. He was encouraging us to take the journey into Pardes!

We see these four dimensions being used by Jesus Christ during his Ministry. In Pshat (literal), it's interesting that he never used this level to teach the masses. He only expressed literal interpretation of the scriptures when addressing the Pharisees. In Remez (parable, allegory), this is the level he used to begin teaching the masses. In Derasha (seek, search), from among the masses, he chose his 12 apostles to reveal to them the deeper understanding of the parable or allegory. In Sod (inner mystical), he chose 3 from among his apostles, and revealed to them the inner mystical truth of himself on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Likewise, to this day, the Holy Spirit is teaching us and leading us in the same manner!

THE JOURNEY

Each letter in the acronym is a new dimension of Biblical understanding of the scriptures, however, exploration into all four dimensions leads to *direct, face to face communion with the presence of God, Himself*, as was experienced in the first Paradise, the Garden of Eden! Old Testament and New Testament Champions of the Quest (seekers) understand from the beginning this journey is much, much more than just a journey into knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Anyone can get knowledge..... It is, in fact, a journey into a *relationship*, or should it be said, *return* to a relationship.

After the fall and before Jesus Christ, God our Father introduced the Tabernacle and the Temple to his people as the center, or meeting place for their relationship. However, only one person, the High Priest, was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies, and that only once per year for the sins of the people. This artificial relationship was very imperfect and did not please God at all. What he wanted was not sacrifice for sin, but rather a personal *relationship* with every single individual, as in Paradise, the Garden of Eden! In Jesus Christ, his son, this relationship has been restored as it originally existed in the Garden (see our article on [The Garden](#), with evidence that the Temple was indeed the prototype of the Garden of Eden!). The experience of that relationship is the treasure, the prize of the high calling..... Phillipians 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

The ultimate of that relationship is also what is called the "face to face" relationship..... I Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

There are many religious even today, as the Pharisees in Jesus' day, who object to the seeking of a deeper understanding of truth in the scriptures. They perceive there is only one understanding, therefore, hindering the progression of others. Obviously, this is a grave error in discernment on their part (see our article on [Truth - Like a Diamond in the Sky](#)).

There is a magnificent quote by Rabbi Samuel Penner.....

"You and I can measure how far we have come on our journey by our readiness to reach out to others, to encourage their growth and advance thereby the renewal of society."

The Pardes is both process and fulfillment! By opening lines of communication with the Word of God, one is already on the way to Paradise while yet on earth! This method of spiritual growth and understanding is probably the most full, comprehensive, and *balanced* penetration of the inner Kingdom of God. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we are better equipped now than ever before to render fair judgment of this claim!

FOUR LEVELS OF PARDES DEFINED

Before moving on into the individual understanding of the different dimensions, please keep in mind that within each level are *many* levels that melt and blend into one another as they cross over from one level to the next level. There are no set boundaries that say, this understanding belongs here in this level, or that understanding belongs there in that level.

Ephesians 3:18 *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

P Pshat ~ Breadth

literal, simple

The first of these levels of understanding the Bible, the Word of God, is the literal, or simple level. It's the level of interpretation of scripture whereby most who come to the Word of God for the first time are encouraged to understand. We study the literal history of the scriptures. We learn about the Bible heroes. We learn about memorization. The purpose of this level is to: *mold, shape, form, or fabricate*

which is the definition of the Greek root word for BREADTH (G4111), in Ephesians 3:18.

It's the beginnings of our understanding in Christ. It's where we start out our children in Sunday (or Sabbath) school. It's where we start in coming to Christ as a "little child." This level of understanding is what molds, shapes, and forms our belief system! It is a very important level, and although the simplest, it's probably one of the most dangerous in that it molds, shapes, and forms our belief system. A mistake here will cause many to fall into deep error!

If one starts out in Pshat, one must not stay there very long.

We are to come to Jesus Christ as a little child (*Mark 10:15*), but we certainly are not to remain there.....

I Corinthians 13:11-12 *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.* In this level of understanding, we come to know the Breadth. However, we are encouraged to move on to the next level of meaning, and understanding of scripture.....

R Remez ~ Length

parable, allegory

After one has attained basic understanding of Bible history, its stories, and characters, we move on to the next level of biblical understanding, Remez - parable, allegory, length. The purpose of this level is to..... *make larger (in age), to expand or make bigger, to make strong* which is the definition of the Greek word for LENGTH (G3372/G3173), in Ephesians 3:18.

The word *parable* in the New Testament is a symbol, or fictitious narrative to be used as a comparison. The purpose of speaking in parables, or symbols, was to get the people to *think*! It is the first step into the journey beneath what is literal.

Parables are our first lessons in symbolism, and teaches us to make comparisons! These comparisons exercise the mind to think. What it does is take something spiritual, and frames it in a literal story. What the people must do is think about what is literal, then convert it to its spiritual counterpart.

This comparison thinking then opens up the mind to allegory, which is the next step on this level of understanding. Allegory is a little different than parable. Where parable takes what is spiritual and makes it literal, allegory takes what is literal and makes it spiritual! We see allegory at work where the apostle Paul said.....

Galatians 4:22-26 *For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

In the above allegory, God took literal events and characters such as Abraham and Agar, and used those literal persons and literal events to represent a spiritual understanding that is *not* literal! Therefore, would it then be wrong to say that the literal Isaac and Ishmael actually represent two covenants, and that the literal Jerusalem represents the mother of us all?

Which interpretation is correct? The answer is that *both* are correct, the one story, although different, does not cancel out the other, but rather expands the other! And, the greatest of all allegories to understand are these.....

Romans 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

What this is saying is that absolutely everything that is physical (literal) can be used to understand what is spiritual, even God's eternal power and Godhead!!! That is a very big statement, because everything physical would include the study of Mathematics, Science, Physics, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Geography, Astronomy, Architecture, Art, Engineering, and on, and on, and on..... The study of all of these different aspects of what is "literal" and using them to understand what is spiritual is a great, great task, and brings *balance* to both mind and spirit! When one begins to look at a sunset, or a painting, or a mathematical equation, or the human mind, and understand its spiritual implication, it deepens the relationship one has with

the Father, and all of a sudden, everything becomes filled with the expression of God! This truth deepens one's relationship with God by expanding one's vision, and to expand one's vision regarding comparisons is also to learn spiritual discernment.

Thus far, we have comprehended the Breadth, and now the Length, but the end of it is not yet. We are encouraged to move on even further into comprehension of what is the Depth.....

T D Derasha ~ Depth to seek, to search, to explore

Now that one has matured and expanded one's mind (in Remez) to understand the principles of parable and allegory, and is able to discern what is literal, what is spiritual, what is parable, and what is allegory, he is now mature enough to further expand his horizons. The purpose of this level is to..... *seek and search out the deep and profound mysteries*

which is the definition of the Greek word for DEPTH (G899/G901/G939), in Ephesians 3:18, and whose numeric value is 282, this Ministry's most favorite mystical number! This level of understanding of the scriptures is where most people who are unschooled start to get nervous, because it ventures into realms that are not literal, not parable, and not allegory. It goes even deeper than that. It's peering into the very core and nature of the individual *words* of the Bible by going back into the original languages, and other texts for the purpose of discovering and understanding intent and ideas. It is not enough to read the Bible literally (first dimension) or allegorically (second dimension). We are challenged to search out the fullest *intent* of the divine Word of God. (Does the word "intent" sound familiar? Think of Florida and chads!). In addition to seeking and searching out intent, we are also seeking and searching out *ideas*!

One example of many examples is the study of Jewish Mysticism, which starts out by teaching us that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are not just letters, but actually living, creative *powers*! (Read the Jewish Book of Formation, Sefer Yetzirah and the..... 32 Paths of Wisdom,), which also opens the door to the numeric cyphering of Biblical words.

This level of study is not limited to just Jewish Mysticism, there are many, many other tools, texts, and disciplines we have at our disposal as well.

Many Christians are afraid to look at other texts other than the Bible, because they have been taught it is wrong, and taught that no other text is inspired. While it is true that this level of understanding is only for the spiritually mature (in Judaism it's only for those over 40 years of age), it is a great error in discernment to suggest that one should "never" study other avenues of thought. Because of the statement in Romans 1:20, above (in Remez), *all texts are inspired if what you are looking for in them, is God!* We are not to be afraid of reading or studying other texts. We are supposed to have developed in Pshat and Remez, the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to look at any text, and perceive what is or isn't! That is the *freedom* that comes with maturity. Many do not attain to this level, because the study is very intense, and many just do not have the desire, focus, or stamina to do it. They would rather "keep it simple," which is perfectly okay to do, if that is what satisfies. However, for Champions of the Quest, keeping it simple is just not in the vocabulary!

Many may say to themselves, "Why does anyone want to look so deeply into the scriptures?" Only a Derasha level seeker could answer that question - Why? because we have to. It's a love and passion! It's like the old question, "Why does anyone want to climb a mountain or go into outer space?" The answer always comes back, "Because it's there!" It's in our nature to explore. Likewise, many of us are seekers and Champions of the Quest. It is more than just wanting to know, it is wanting to experience that relationship.

There are some who have added yet another, separate level of understanding between this one and Sod, called GEMATRIA, but this Ministry feels that numeric cyphering is also a part of this level in Derasha. You can judge for yourself! As was said in the beginning, within each level are many levels that melt and blend into one another as they move from one level to the next. There are no set boundaries that say, this understanding belongs here in this level, or that understanding belongs there in that level. This now leads us to the final level of understanding the scriptures. Thus far, we've comprehended the Breadth, the Length, and the Depth. Now it's time to move on to the Height.....

D S Sod ~ Height inner, mystical

This level of understanding is what this Ministry calls the Eighth Day Assembly, our namesake (see article on the, Eighth Day Sabbath), which incorporates internalization of scripture! The purpose of this level is to.....

cross over, lift up, elevate to the sky

which is the definition of the Greek word for HEIGHT (G5311/G5228), in Ephesians 3:18.

There are many who believe that the Eighth Day speaks of a future time in the millennium. This Ministry does not. We believe this level of understanding can be experienced today, in the here and now, on a *daily* basis! It is a day that began at the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will continue until the *final consummation*.

Please read the following text taken from our article on the Eighth Day Sabbath..... "Thus, the enclosure of the Eighth Day speaks of the revelation revealed only through intimacy and usually of a private nature. In this intimacy, what is revealed is not the revelation of the natural world, but rather the revelation of the world to come.

Therefore, the Eighth Day is very special unto God. It symbolizes one's removal from the ways, struggles, and doctrines of the material world, and encloses one into the intimacy and protection of the bride chamber prepared by Christ Himself where the Bride and the Bridegroom experience the 'face-to-face' relationship, above the earthly realm.

A day that is not counted among earthly days. In that sense, it is a 'hidden' day. Not having place within the boundaries of the earthly 7 days, it is not something you see, but rather something you experience. And in Christ, it can be experienced daily, not just on Saturday or Sunday." Likewise, the interpretation and understanding of the scriptures takes on the same nature and character as that intimate, personal relationship. What happens is that the scriptures become *internalized*! They are not literal, they are not parable, they are not "out there" in the getting of knowledge from other sources, *they are here, inside* each and every one of us! Indeed, the Kingdom of God is *within* us! It's the revelation of who we are in Christ, ".....*but then shall I know even as also I am known.*" (I Corinthians 13:12)! As an example, instead of perceiving the Canaanite tribes as actual, literal tribes that inhabited Israel (which they were), each Canaanite tribe represents facets of our own, personal, negative personality, to this day! (see article on the Land of Canaan.)

Ultimately, things like the creation of the universe, Adam, Eve, the Serpent, (see article on the identity of The Serpent), Israel, Old Testament, New Testament, *the Book of Revelation*, Jewish Mysticism, angels, all knowledge, all revelation, all faith, becomes revealed not in our literal ideas of heaven and earth, but rather, hidden deep within each and every one of us. What is macrocosm becomes a microcosm within us, in our own hearts, in our own personalities, in our own motives, in our own thoughts, in our own ideas. Which directly is the cause and effect of our own *reality* on this earth!

Some may think that if the scriptures are internalized, it takes away from the literal, the parable, and the study. This is absolutely not so! The ultimate example is Jesus Christ himself! Jesus chose Peter, James, and John from among his disciples, and took them to the Mount (symbol of Sod - height), and had them to witness his Transfiguration! The apostles did not understand what they saw. They did not realize they were witnessing Jesus Christ *internalizing* or *transfiguring* the Word, the scriptures (himself), to reflect in himself both Moses - the Law, and Elijah - the Prophets!

Once scripture has been internalized as Jesus' example on the Mount of Transfiguration, we begin to realize none of this has anything to do with what is *out there*, and that it's all *in here*. God is then able to meet us face to face right where we are in Christ. When identity has been both realized and enjoined, there is yet one last facet of understanding within Sod. It is an experience beyond understanding because of the magnitude of the internalization.

It's a level this Ministry feels we are unable to seek, search out, or teach in the physical sense. A level in which one is caught-away by God Himself. A level apparently where understanding is not a requirement for this experience, but what is required is the *relationship*. There have been a few examples that have experienced this invitation. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him (Genesis 5:24), Elijah, the prophets, and also one revealed by the apostle Paul.....

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 *2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

The man spoken of by Paul who was caught-up into paradise saw and heard things he was not allowed to utter, therefore, the person did come back to this reality as did the prophets, so we know it is a level of intimacy experienced in the here and now, yet speaks of a time yet to come. Because of the nature of the event, it would be very difficult to tell anyone of the experience, because the experience is wholly individual, personal, and could be greatly misunderstood. Some are allowed to tell, others are not. Therefore, whether we are allowed to tell, or not to tell, this ultimate, intimate experience actually brings us full circle.....

That full circle, or in other words, FOURSQUARE, is the..... Breadth, Length, Depth, and Height which is the time, the place, and the space in which we are to meet with God our Father, as in the Garden of Eden (see article on The Garden). Pardes ~ this is the place hedged about by Grace into which is poured all the "fullness of God." The fullness of God being that treasure that lies deep within. Those of us Champions of the Quest who find ourselves seeking and searching for something other than the fullness of God (which most of us do a few times around) are destined to wander in circles round, and round again.

Our journey is not so that we can get to know as much as we can know. It is rather to lead us to that place of *forgiveness* within ourselves, called the Love of Christ, our Rest, our Peace, our Eighth Day Sabbath. That place prepared for us by Jesus Christ that passes knowledge, which end is to be filled with all the fulness of God!

Ephesians 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* The fullness of God is the ultimate treasure of the Champions of the Quest. It's the Holy Grail, the prize, the purpose, and the high calling! Let us all be vigilant as we press toward that mark.

May God Bless you in your great journey on the Road to Zion ! Amen!

It is helpful to know that there are many other aspects to each level of understanding that are not mentioned here. It is our challenge that "whosoever will," will come to know and understand all of those different aspects.