

Learning to Listen

Key Verse: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
—Matthew 13:9

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:9-17

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10

Our Key Verse follows the parable of the sower. (Matt. 13:3-8) Jesus then stated, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (vs. 9) Since the Master was addressing "great multitudes" (vs. 2), it is evident not everyone would be able to receive and understand these teachings. Therefore, his disciples subsequently posed an important question, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"—vs. 10

Jesus distinguished his true followers from the unbelieving masses. He said, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (vs. 11) He then elaborated upon the need for his hearers to have an appreciative heart attitude in order to grasp the intent of his message. "Whoever has [spiritual knowledge], to him will more be given and he will be furnished richly, so that he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."—Matt. 13:12, *Amplified Version*

Thus in our Lord's day, and since that time, many have lacked spiritual insight because they have been indifferent respecting the import of the Gospel Age.

JESUS USED SEVEN PARABLES in Matthew 13 to describe events that would occur during the Gospel Age, prior to the inauguration of a righteous government on earth for which he taught his disciples to pray—

any will be done in earth, as it is

message. (vs. 13) In Old Testament times, Isaiah predicted that most of the people to whom Messiah preached would be insensitive to the voice of God.—vs. 14

Many Christians today believe the mission of Christ and his church is to convert the world. How can that thought be reconciled with the following words of our Lord? “This people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”—Matt. 13:15

Those who have hearkened to the Master’s teachings understand that his purpose is not world conversion during this present Gospel Age; but the message of discipleship is an invitation to self-denial and crossbearing in this life which, if faithfully performed, will result in the attainment of a heavenly reward and joint-heirship with Christ. The Apostle Paul said, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Rom. 8:16,17

Large numbers of the human family are blinded by Satan, “the god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), and are unable to receive the special offer of discipleship to live and reign with Christ in heaven.—II Tim. 2:11,12

Nevertheless, it is the Father’s will to “have all men to be saved [from death], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (I Tim. 2:4) Thus, in “the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21), mankind will have an opportunity to learn righteousness and live in a perfect earth, and there shall be no more death after Satan and all evil are destroyed.—Rev. 21:3,4

If we are among those whose minds have been enlightened to appreciate these matters and to devote our lives in obedience to the teachings of Christ, we are indeed most blessed.—Matt. 13:16,17 ■