

**(Matt. 13:1-3,10)** – *Matthew 13:1-3* tells us that when Christ left the house where He taught the people, He went to the seashore, and “*GREAT MULTITUDES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER UNTO HIM.*” There were so many that He had to get on a ship and speak to them standing on the shore. “*AND HE SPAKE MANY THINGS UNTO THEM IN PARABLES*” – Up to this point, Christ had spoken plainly and clearly the doctrines of the Gospel and the kingdom of God, but now He changes His method of teaching to parables. “Parable” is made up of two Greek words which together mean “to place alongside of.” A parable, therefore, is a story with earthly elements put alongside spiritual truth to illustrate and reinforce the basic meaning of that truth being taught. When seeking to find the meaning of parables, there are a few rules to follow:

(1) Parables only illustrate doctrine. We do not derive our doctrine from parables. We get our doctrine from the plain and clear statements of Scripture as compared with the rest of Scripture.

(2) Parables must never be overly analyzed as if every element in a parable has some specific spiritual meaning. Whenever the Lord spoke a parable, He explained its meaning, and each parable generally illustrated and taught one particular truth.

(3) Parables do not have to be actual historical events. Again, they are stories used to teach spiritual truth.

The parables recorded in *Matthew 13* are the kingdom parables which the Lord used to define and describe the nature of His kingdom as set forth in the New Covenant age leading up to His second coming. The first one is the parable of the seed and the soils (*Matt. 13:3-9*). When He spoke these parables, He also gave their meaning. He did not leave it to us to figure out the meaning. But before He explained this first parable, the disciples asked Him, “*WHY SPEAKEST THOU UNTO THEM IN PARABLES?*”

**(Matt. 13:11)** – He answered, “*BECAUSE IT IS GIVEN UNTO YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT TO THEM IT IS NOT GIVEN.*” To hear the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ is a great privilege, but to hear and believe it is a gift of God’s grace (*Eph. 2:8-9*). Christ sets forth the sovereign glory and prerogative of God. God is pleased to reveal the Gospel to His chosen people while denying it to others (*Matt. 11:25; Rom. 9:15-16*). Even so, the Lord spoke in parables and gave to His people, for whom He died and who were justified by His righteousness imputed, the gift of spiritual life and faith to believe His truth of salvation by grace, while others were left in their natural ignorance (*1 Cor. 2:14*).

**(Matt. 13:12)** – Those who have a genuine, God-given interest in the truth will receive more truth and a greater understanding. Those who stubbornly and willfully shut their

eyes and minds to the light of truth will become more and more confused and opposed to what they hear. They will not believe because they are not of Christ's sheep (John 10:26).

**(Matt. 13:13)** – The Jews had seen so much of the power and greatness of Jesus Christ. They had beheld the wonders of His Person and His power to perform miracles. They had heard the uniqueness of His doctrine. Nevertheless, they refused to believe Him and even despised Him (Isa. 53:3). Having spoken the plain truth to them, the Lord now conceals the truth in parables as a judgment upon those who refuse.

**(Matt. 13:14-15)** – This rejection of Christ and His truth by the Jews was a fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 6:9-10). The same sun that melts wax hardens clay, and their hearts had grown hard with false, self-righteous religion that fed their pride. They understood that to believe in and follow Christ according to the Gospel would require them to repent of all that they highly esteemed as contributing to their salvation – *“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.”* This conversion is the sovereign and invincible work of the Holy Spirit as He reveals our sin and depravity in light of God's holiness and justice, and as He reveals Christ in the glory of His Person and power of His work of redemption to pay for our sins and work righteousness by which God is just to justify us (John 16:9-11; Php. 3:7-9; Isa. 6:1-9). He brings us to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry.

**(Matt. 13:16-17)** – *“BLESSED”* hear means happy, well off, highly favored in the truth and in the grace of God. All who see and hear the glory of God in Christ and in salvation by grace with spiritual eyes and ears that bring us to faith are truly blessed of God. The prophets and all of the justified saints in the Old Testament were given spiritual eyes and ears to believe in Christ, but they saw Him only in prophecy and in types. These disciples were greatly privileged to see and hear Him in person as God manifest in the flesh. But they were especially blessed to see Him as their sovereign Lord and Savior, the Lord their righteousness. The prophets and all justified persons, sinners saved by grace, in the Old Testament desired to see the Messiah in person and hear Him speak, but this was not God's plan for them. However, they did see and hear the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit concerning Christ and salvation just as these disciples did. The saints of old trusted Christ Who would come in their future. They saw Him afar off and lived by God-given faith on the promise of His coming. They did not live to see the promise of His actual advent on earth (Heb. 11:13,39-40). So, the Lord tells these disciples who were present with Him how blessed and privileged they were. We today who believe in Him are truly blessed as we look to Him Who has come and done His great work of redemption for us.