BLESSED INSIGHT
(Matt. 13:16-17)

Matthew 13 marks a MAJOR transition in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Because the nation rejected kingdom truth as found in the person of Christ, they would be given no further kingdom insights. And this is the point of the parables in Matthew 13.

These parables serve two purposes: 1) They conceal further kingdom truth from those rejecting Christ, and 2) they reveal additional kingdom insights to those who are true disciples.

> **Matthew 13:11 (NKJV)**
> **11** He answered and said to them, "Because it has been **given to you to know** the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**, but **to them it has not been given.**

Willful rejection of the truth results in judicial judgment in which the light of God's revelation is removed.

Here in Matthew 13:11 Christ clearly states what is the substantive content of the parables in view in this chapter. They reveal the mysteries of the kingdom. As seen in the parallel passages in the other synoptic gospels "***kingdom of heaven***" is here synonymous with "***kingdom of God***" (cf. Mk. 4:11). We also see these two phrases being used interchangeably in Matthew, as seen, for example, in Matthew 19:23-24.

In view is the same Messianic kingdom the OT prophets looked forward to; the same kingdom John the Baptist anticipated as being at hand on the condition of repentance (Mt. 3:2); the same kingdom Jesus spoke of as being at hand on the condition of repentance (Mt. 4:17); the same kingdom disciples were still anticipating for Christ to set up after His resurrection (cf. Acts 1:6); and the same kingdom anticipated throughout the rest of the NT. The kingdom in view throughout is consistently the coming Messianic kingdom.

> "In sum, Acts 3:19-26 is a strategic passage for the kingdom program. McClain says with this section, 'we have something better than a term,' we actually have 'a *definition* of the Kingdom.' And this definition has three components. First, in regard to '**content**,' the kingdom brings 'the restoration of all things.' Second as for '**timing**,' the kingdom comes when God sends the Christ appointed for Israel after His session at the right hand of the Father. And third, the

> **condition** for the kingdom's coming is 'contingent upon the repentance and conversion of Israel.'"
>
> **–** ***Michael Vlach*** in He Will Reign Forever – p. 421

Vlach asserts in this book: "***The kingdom of God is the great and grand theme of the Scripture."*** (p. 21 and 582)

The point is that the KINGDOM theme of Scripture is grand! It is one of the MAJOR themes, and everything is ultimately moving towards the kingdom, and ultimately everyone will either share in the kingdom or be cast out of it. So it is with great interest that we study these parables in Matthew 13 for further kingdom insights.

> ***Mystery:*** Truth that was previously hidden but is now revealed by God.
>
> ***Parable***: A story that illustrates God's truth (in the context of kingdom truth).
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> ***"Mysteries of the kingdom"*** = Further kingdom insights now being revealed.

After Jesus emphasized that those who have a personal relationship with Him are those who do the will of the Father in heaven (Mt. 12:50), thematically, Matthew then immediately transitions to Christ's teaching in parables and immediately recounts the parable of the Sower, the seed, and the soils. Following this, we see Christ's answer as to WHY He now spoke to the crowds in parables, as seen in Matthew 13:10-15. We now pick the study up at Matthew 13:16.

In contrast to concealing further kingdom truth from the Christ-rejecting general populace, Jesus said to His disciples…

Matthew 13:16–17 (NKJV)
16 But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;
17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

In contrast to the crowds, which largely saw but did not see and heard but did not really hear because their HEARTS had grown dull (cf. Mt 13:14-15), Christ said the disciples were blessed because of what they now saw and heard. Christ is speaking of kingdom truth that recognizes Him as the promised Messiah King.

There was still MUCH they didn't see, but they did see the truth on a level that the crowd generally didn't see - and were not open to see.

The word "blessed" (Gk. Makarios) indicates fortunate or happy. It indicates being joyfully privileged because of God's good favor.

Jesus said that "***many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."*** "*Here one cannot help but include Simeon (Luke 2:25-35) and Anna (Luke 2:36-38)*." (D.A. Carson)

The desire of pious Jews down through the centuries had been to see the Messiah and His kingdom. Now these disciples were privileged (blessed) to actually see the Messiah and sample His kingdom in the form of kingdom sign miracles. Hebrews 6:5 says they tasted the powers of the kingdom age to come.

> **1 Peter 1:10–12 (NKJV)**
> **10** Of this salvation the **prophets have inquired and searched carefully**, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,
> **11 searching** what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the **sufferings of Christ** and the **glories that would follow**.
> **12** To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but **to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported** to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—**things which angels desire to look into**.

Earlier in the chapter we are introduced to Christ's introductory parable about the Sower, the Seed, and the Soils. I call this the "***Mother of all Parables***" because all the other parables build on it.

> **Mark 4:13 (NKJV)**
> And He said to them, "Do you not understand **this parable** [*Of the Sower and the Soils*]? How then will you **understand all the parables**?

This is the "gateway" parable that describes who ultimately is going into the kingdom and who is not, based on their response to God's message. Jesus is now going to reveal what those blessed are privileged to see.