

Secrets and Stories Matthew 13: 10-16

This passage in Matthew 13, a chapter containing 7 parables about the kingdom of God, seeks to provide an answer to the disciples question; why speak in parables? It has parallel passages in Mark 4:10-12 and Luke 8:9-10. All of them quote from Isaiah 6:9-10.

aV.11 - What are the "secrets" that Jesus speaks of?

V.12 What is being given and what is being taken?

Think of and share with the group a time when God opened your eyes to a truth that you had not previously perceived.

v.12-13 "God sovereignly uses the parables to either harden a person's heart so that he or she will be unable to respond (v.15), or to elicit the positive response of coming to Jesus, asking for an explanation and accepting his message." - ESV Study Bible

Central to this passage is a quotation from Isaiah 6.

Read the whole of Isaiah 6 to get the context of the quotation.

The prophecy had an immediate fulfilment in Isaiah's lifetime, few people heeded Isaiah's words and a long era of political disasters began during the course of his ministry. It also has a future fulfilment when the kingdom of heaven comes.

"God decrees that the prophet's ministry will have a hardening effect on his own generation, whose character was laid bare in ch. 1-5. The openness of faith is a gift of grace, but the unresponsive hearer finds the message only hardens him to God's gracious purposes." - ESV Study Bible

God in his divine wisdom chose to reveal himself progressively to humankind through direct revelation and the prophets in the Old Testament and through Jesus and the Apostles in the New. To give an example in Genesis the Trinity is only hinted at whilst in Revelation we see the Son in all his glory seated at the right hand of the Father.

Try and think of some other examples.

One example is that the Messiah will come twice. This had not been perceived in OT times until Jesus revealed it. See verses 47-50. - The Jews in the time of Jesus were probably expecting the coming Messiah's appearance to be similar to the second coming that we are waiting for.

In the Gospels Jesus limits what he says about himself, particularly to those who are not his disciples, until after his resurrection. Why is this?

The parables follow this pattern of progressive revelation. Knowledge of the kingdom of heaven was initially given only to the disciples (v.11) now we can all read about it!

Further examples of God's progressive revelation:

The Cross Acts 8:30-35

The resurrection Acts 2:24-32

The promise of salvation and eternal life (1 Peter 1:3, 10-12)

Prayer Topics

ADB

Thank God that he has opened our eyes to the truth's contained in His word.
That we would be effective in explaining the truths of Scripture to others.