

“He Spake Many Things, Unto Them in Parables”

Lesson
11
Summary

Matthew 13; Why Jesus taught in parables—He gives the parables of the sower, the wheat and the tares, the grain of mustard seed, the leaven, the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea—A prophet is not honored by his own people.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Three Tools of Learning:** God gave us seeing (visual), hearing (audio) and feeling (kinesthetic). One of the ways of recognizing these meta-programs (human perception modes) is in the words we use to describe our reactions: “I see,” “Sounds right to me,” “I feel all right about this.” “. . . then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (*Genesis 3:5*) “And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.” (*Deuteronomy 5:1*) “Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.” (*Ecclesiastes 8:5*)

Isaiah Used Simple Words as Metaphors: He is reaching those who can see, those who can hear, and those who perceive. “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” (*Isaiah 6:10*) Please note the chiasmus: heart, ears, eyes, then eyes, ears, heart. The center point being eyes; Isaiah is giving us an “insight.”

Advertising Experts: The appeal is to our eyes, make it sound right, and have us feel the worth of their products. These are the most powerful meta-programs to teach about and experience life, even Eternal Life.

The Real Setting: Around the eastern and northern shores of the Sea of Galilee are numerous coves. They were created by erosion as the prolific rainfall in the winter months raced downward through small canyons to the lake, drawing the black igneous basalt stone and gravel out past the shoreline. One such cove is very close to Capernaum. There are boulders of stone, choking thorn bushes, and patches of fertile land all situated close to the road that leads to Capernaum, where Jesus lived. People can easily stand around a boat anchored a little way out from the shore in the cove. The water easily reflects the sound of someone speaking from the boat to the audience at some distance from the vessel. This setting of the parable in Matthew 13 is more understandable than speaking from a boat to a multitude on a straight shoreline.

Message Within a Message: The most significant message in the parable of the sower is in verse twelve. It is the center of a chiasmic image. It is a message of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. The parable uses the wayside, stony place, and the thorns as image points. Then in reverse, consider that the heart was not pricked, the ears were not unplugged (as if stones were in their ears), and their hearts couldn't understand the way. The inspired translation of that verse makes the lesson of using the gift of the Holy Ghost easier to understand. “For whosoever receiveth to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever continueth not to receive, from him shall be taken even that he hath” (*JST Matthew 13:12*)

Modern Proverb: “If you don't use it, you'll lose it.” By exercising the gift, it expands and grows. The parables Jesus used offered learning experiences on the level of those listening and according to their sense of understanding. Parables are like paintings. They can be studied for more interpretation. Many of Jesus' parables contained references of nature and human experiences.

Nature Used in Teaching: “The laws of ritual purity and impurity, the parables taken from nature and the accounts of God's providence over His creatures all involve biology.” “The first connection between birds and Judaism is found in the Bible where there are numerous descriptions, parables and allegories taken from bird life, as well as laws concerning their ritual fitness as food. To the 37 birds mentioned in the Bible, the Talmud adds many more discussing in particular, what features make a bird “unclean,” and therefore not kosher.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Teaching wit Stories: “When the Gaon of Vilna, the great rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman fell ill and was too weak to study, he asked the Dubno *maggid* to visit him and read him his stories, parables and biblical interpretations. Once the