November 6, 2022 **“Expansion Of The Kingdom” II** Billy Burchfield

 **Mark 4:9-12,** And He was saying, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear**.” 10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. 11 And He was saying to them, “To **you** has been given the **mystery** of the kingdom of God, but those who are **outside** get everything in parables, 12 **so that** while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven.” Here, **mystery** denotes something that people could never know by their own understanding and that demands **a revelation from God**.

In this Parable, the birds represent Satan, who ***snatches the seed*** away (Mark 4:15). Some of *the* ***growth***will give opportunity for Satan to get in and go to work! Judas was in the disciple band, Ananias and Sapphira were in fellowship with the Jerusalem church (Acts 5:1–11). Simon Magus was part of the church in Samaria (Acts 8:1–24), and Satan’s ministers boldly invaded the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 11:13–15). **Through faith in Jesus** Christ, we become **citizens** of the heavenly nation, **children** in God’s family, and **subjects** of *The King of kings and Lord of lords*.

**Mark 4:11–12:** In the *context of unbelief and hostility*. *To those who believed*, God (unbelievers) ***everything***, (message and mission) was stated ***in parables*.**

In 1:14–15, **God enabled** the disciples to ***see in Him*** the “*secret***;**” God’s *present* kingdom plan which is to be **an** **Age of** “***seed-sowing***” (4:13–20; 13:10). It was hidden to the prophets, but **now** is revealed to true believers (Rom. 16:25–26).

**The secret:** **In** Jesus, **God’s rule** (kingdom) has come into human experience in a new **spiritual** form. God revealed to disciples this “secret” though they understood little of its full impact.

Those **blinded by unbelief** saw in Jesus nothing but a threat to their existence. They rejected **Him** and did not come to know the “secret” of God’s kingdom. In Isa. 6:9–10, Isaiah said that this spiritual blindness and deafness that comes to people is God’s **judgment.** He particularly referred to Israel (Mark 6:9, “*this people*”) for ***rejecting*** God’s revelation as expressed **in** Jesus.

**Hearers** were ***not***denied the opportunity to believe in Him. **But** after they **persistently** closed their **minds** to His message, they were excluded from further understanding. The parables, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten, and reveal it (12:12). They preserved **people’s freedom to believe** (4:11a).

A parable begins as ***a picture*** that arrests our attention and arouses our interest. ***As we study*** the picture, it becomes ***a mirror*** in which we see ourselves. **If** we continue to look by faith, the mirror becomes *a* ***window*** through which we see God and His truth. How **we** **respond** to that truth will **determine** what **further** **truth** God will **teach** us. Jesus used parables to hide and reveal **truth**. The parables judged the crowd. The **careless listener** would hear only a story that he did not understand; the ***result*** in his life would be judgment (Matt. 11:25–30). The **sincere listener**, with a desire to know God’s truth, would **ponder** the parable, **confess** his ignorance, **submit** to the Lord, and then **begin** to understand the spiritual lesson Jesus was teaching.

“***Hear*.**” in Mark 4:1–34: Jesus was not speaking about ***physical*** hearing, **but** about **hearing with spiritual discernment;** to **understand** and **obey** it (James 1:22–25).

**Fruitless hearts** are influenced by different enemies: **hard heart**, the devil himself snatches the seed; **shallow heart**, the flesh **counterfeits** religious feelings; the **crowded heart**, the things of the world smother the growth and prevent a harvest. These are the ***three great enemies*** of the Christian: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1–3).

**We are to understand with a heart of obedience.**