

**Why did Jesus speak in parables to the crowds?**

**Bible Question:**

**Why did Jesus speak in parables to the crowds? If He had to later explain the parables to the disciples, how were the crowds to understand his teachings?**

**Bible Answer:**

**You have asked the same question that Jesus' disciples asked about why He spoke in parables. You are in wonderful company.**

**And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" (NASB) Matt. 13:10**

**This question came after Jesus initially presented the parable of the sower of the seed which is contained in Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-15. Matthew provides the most detailed account.**

**Speaking In Parables**

**Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that Jesus initially presented the parable of the sower and seed without an explanation. After Jesus had given the parable and when Jesus and His disciples were alone, the disciples asked why He spoke to the crowd in parables. Jesus' reply is at first stunning. This is what He said,**

**Jesus answered them, "To you, it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them, it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (NASB) Matt. 13:11-13**

**In this passage, we discover that Jesus told the disciples that the crowd would not be allowed to know the meaning of the parable. God the Father had not permitted them to know. Therefore, Jesus spoke in parables so that the crowd would not understand spiritual truth. At first, this seems unfair. One would think that they would have understood if they had just been allowed to understand the meaning! Correct?**

**But notice Jesus' very important comment that anyone who already has will be given more and anyone who does not have will end up with nothing. That is, they had been given much, but they had rejected the truth of the evidence. At this point, Jesus had been ministering for at least three years and this crowd did not believe. Therefore, Jesus says that their ears heard, their eyes saw, and their minds worked. But after seeing and hearing, they rejected what they saw and heard. Their problem was more fundamental than the simple ability to see, hearing, and thinking. Jesus tells us in the next few verses that they were spiritually blind, spiritually deaf, and as a result spiritually ignorant. He explains by quoting a prophecy of Isaiah.**

***In their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, "You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them." (NASB) Matthew 13:14-15***

***Notice that Jesus said, ". . . the heart of this people has become dull . . ." Their eyes are closed. They did not hear. That is, they had a spiritual heart problem that affected their spiritual vision and spiritual hearing. Then Jesus added this to His disciples,***

***But blessed are your eyes because they see; and your ears, because they hear. (NASB) Matthew 13:16***

### ***Hearing, Seeing, and Understanding***

***In Matthew 13:13 Jesus said that some people hear but do not understand. Then in the next verse, we read that the prophet Isaiah predicted that people would hear but not understand. What did Jesus mean by "hearing" and "understanding"? The answer is found by comparing the parallel passages of Matthew 13:19 and Luke 8:12.***

***When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. (NASB) Matt. 13:19***

***Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart so that they will not believe and be saved. (NASB) Luke 8:12***

***Both passages refer to the same event and describe what happens after the seed is thrown beside the road. Matthew 13:19 reveals that those who are beside the road do not understand the Word of God after they hear it. Luke 8:12 adds that these same people did not believe and were not saved. The phrase "does not understand" means that they did not believe and did not have eternal life. But those who did hear and did understand with a spiritual heart became Christians and grew spiritually throughout the rest of their lives. That is, they persevered.***

***But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (NASB) Luke 8:15***

### ***Why Parables?***

***Now we can answer your question. From Jesus' comment in Matthew 13:14-15, we discovered that the crowd did not hear and understand. Since Jesus used "do not understand" to refer to one who does not believe, we discover that the crowd that was listening to Jesus had already rejected His message. Matthew 13:14 reveals that they were actively rejecting His teaching,***

***In their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled . . . (NASB) Matt. 13:14***

***The fact they had already rejected Jesus is reinforced by verse 12,***

***For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. (NASB) Matthew 13:12***

***Jesus' statement simply means that those who receive Him will be given more. Those who reject Him will be given less. They had rejected Him; therefore, the explanation of the parables would not be revealed. Luke 8:10 reveals that God the Father had finally judicially judged them. They had rejected Jesus Christ and so God the Father sealed their decision.***

***And He said, "To you, it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest, it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND." Luke 8:10 (NASB)***

***Conclusion:***

***Just think, only one out of the four soil types believed after hearing the Word of God - only 25 percent. Pseudo-science, doubts, wealth, worries, persecution, and trials eventually reveal that a person does not believe in God. Many will hear, but few will understand and gain eternal life. Do you have spiritual ears and a spiritual heart that understands?***

***And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. (NASB) Acts 4:12***

***Predestination and Free Will***

***What does it mean to receive Christ?***

***TO THE GLORY OF CHRIST***

***Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me . . . Jeremiah 9:23-24***