

**Luke 8:1-10**  
**April 7, 2019**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Have you ever seen a person make a profession of faith in Jesus, but then encountered a major disappointment, and then after a while, the person walked away from the faith? [Let people respond]

Q: Why do you think that happens? [a difficult trial hit; maybe they had a conflict occur in the church, maybe they lost a loved one and didn't believe God was there for them; or they had a devastating personal illness.]

Q: Have you ever met a person who made a profession of faith in Jesus with great enthusiasm, but then watched it wane? They settle into a routine of going to church on Sundays, as long as there is not something else "better to do." But God is not central in their lives. [Let people respond yes or no]

Q: How do you explain these people? [Let people engage. Some might say that they have lost their salvation, but that clearly contradicts the many clear passages that teach that those whom God saves, He keeps for eternity. Others might say that these folks are saved, but they are "carnal." They can go through life living in this carnal or worldly state and they will still go to heaven, but they won't have many rewards waiting for them.]

**Transition:** We are getting ready to read a very familiar parable, we see that even Jesus saw people respond superficially to His message. The parable serves both as an encouragement to His followers and a warning to His hearers. The encouragement to His followers is that when we see people respond superficially to the gospel and later fall away, we should not be discouraged in that even Jesus had the same response. The warning to those who hear the parable, of course, is to take it to heart so that we avoid a superficial faith.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

V.1:

- After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,

V.2:

- and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;

V.3:

- Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

V.4:

- While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable:

V.5:

- “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up.

V.6:

- Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture.

V.7:

- Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants.

V.8:

- Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.” When he said this, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

V.9:

- His disciples asked him what this parable meant.

V.10:

- He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, “‘though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q V.1-3: Let’s set the scene. First, what is Jesus and His entourage doing? [They are traveling about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.]

Point of Interest: According to Matthew and Mark’s writings, Jesus is actually in a boat teaching this parable, while many are on the shore listening.

Q: Who is in this entourage? [Jesus’s 12 disciples, and some women who were delivered from demon possession: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna and “many others”]

Q V.3: Why were these three women are following Jesus? [They are so grateful for being physically and spiritually healed. Now they are supporting Jesus and His ministry out of their own means]

Q: Jesus is proclaiming the good news of the “kingdom of God,” which is an interesting phrase. What does that mean? [Let people engage. It denotes the Christian worldview that there is a spiritual kingdom in which, we, His children, live. The kingdom of God is where ever Jesus reigns, which for the believer is in our hearts. He is always with us!]

Q V.9: When Jesus told this parable, who in His group didn’t understand it? [The 12 disciples!]

Q: Why do you think Jesus would tell a parable that even His disciples couldn’t understand? [The answer is in v.10: “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, “‘though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’ By speaking in parables, Jesus was seeking to foster a genuine response from His elect who would apply the truth to their hearts. But He was also concealing the gospel from those who were merely curious but who were not willing to apply it to their hearts.]

**X-REF: Isaiah 6:9** (This quoted at least six times in the NT) [Parables serve two functions: They *reveal* truth to those who are spiritually responsive; and they *conceal* truth from those who are spiritually superficial or scoffing.]

**Note:** For the disciples, God sovereignly granted that they know the mysteries of the kingdom of God (8:10). No one can boast that he discovered these mysteries by his own reasoning or investigation. Only God can reveal them, and He does not reveal them to everyone.

Q: Is God then unfair? [Let people engage. Not at all, because men are responsible for their selfishness, stubbornness, and sin. They have no one but themselves to blame for their own hardness of heart.]

**LOOK:**

Whatever the current state of our hearts, we can appeal to God to grant us a new heart so that we will hold fast to Him and bear fruit with perseverance. Clearly, Jesus was not teaching some sort of fatalism, that the kinds of soils are fixed forever. By God's grace, a person can change. Let's read the passage.

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 199–201). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

One of the major themes in Luke 8 is how to get faith and use it in the everyday experiences of life. In the first section, Jesus laid the foundation by teaching His disciples that faith comes through receiving the Word of God into an understanding heart. In the second part, He put them through a series of “examinations” to see how much they had really learned. Most of us enjoy Bible study, but we wish we could avoid the examinations that often follow the lessons! However, it is in the tests of life that faith really grows and we get closer to Christ.

The cynical American editor H.L. Mencken defined faith as “an illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible,” and Mark Twain said (through one of his characters) that faith is “believin’ what you know ain’t so.” Of course, these men are describing superstition, not faith; for the faith of a Christian rests on solid foundations.

Everybody lives by faith in something or someone. The difference between the Christian believer and the unsaved person is not that one has faith and the other does not. They *both* have faith. The difference is in *the object of their faith*, for faith is only as good as the object. The Christian believer has put his faith in Jesus Christ, and he bases that faith on the Word of God.

### **Teaching: Hearing God's Word (Luke 8:1–15)**

The Lord continued His itinerant ministry in Galilee, assisted by His disciples and partially supported by some godly women. It was not unusual for Jewish rabbis to receive gifts from grateful people, and these women had certainly benefited from Jesus' ministry. The New Testament church leaders were supported by gifts from friends (2 Tim. 1:16–18) and from churches (Phil. 4:15–17), and Paul supported himself by his own labor (2 Thes. 3:6–10).

The word *hear* is used nine times in this section. It means much more than simply listening to words. “Hearing” means listening with spiritual understanding and receptivity. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). With this in mind, we can understand the three admonitions Jesus gave His followers.

***Hear and receive the Word (vv. 4–15).*** Initially, the Sower is Jesus Christ, but the sower represents any of God's people who share the Word of God (John 4:35–38). The seed is the Word of God, for, like seed, the Word has life and power (Heb. 4:12) and can produce spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22–23). But the seed can do nothing until it is planted (John 12:24). When a person hears and understands the Word, then the seed is planted in the heart. What happens after that depends on the nature of the soil.

Jesus called this parable “The Parable of the Sower” (Matt. 13:18), but it could also be called “The Parable of the Soils.” The seed without the soil is fruitless, and the soil without the seed is almost useless. The human heart is like soil: if it is prepared properly, it can receive the seed of the Word of God and produce a fruitful harvest.

Jesus described four different kinds of hearts, three of which did not produce any fruit. The proof of salvation is *fruit* and not merely hearing the Word or making a profession of faith in Christ. Jesus had already made that clear in His “Sermon on the Mount” (Luke 6:43–49; also note Matt. 7:20).

***The hard soil (vv. 5, 12).*** This soil represents the person who hears the Word but immediately allows the devil to snatch the seed away. How did the heart become hard? The “wayside” was the path that ran through the common field, separating the plots; and the foot traffic hardened the

soil. Whatever goes into the ear or eye finally enters the heart, so be careful who is allowed to “walk on your heart.”

*The shallow soil* (vv. 6, 13). This soil illustrates the emotional hearer who quickly responds to the message, but his interest wanes and he does not continue (see John 8:31–32). In many parts of the Holy Land you find a substratum of limestone covered with a thin layer of soil. The shoot can grow up, but the roots cannot go down, and the sun withers the rootless plant. The sun represents the testing that comes to all professing believers to prove their faith. Sun is good for plants *if they have roots*. Persecution can deepen the roots of a true Christian, but it only exposes the shallowness of the false Christian.

*The crowded soil* (vv. 7, 14). This soil illustrates the person who does not repent and “weed out” the things that hinder the harvest. There is enough soil so the roots can go down, but not enough room for the plant to grow up and produce fruit. The plant is crowded out and the fruit is choked. “Cares, riches, and the pleasures of this life” are like weeds in a garden that keep the soil from being fruitful. The person with the “crowded heart” comes closest to salvation, but he still does not bring forth “fruit to perfection.”

*The good soil* (vv. 8, 15). This soil alone is fruitful. It illustrates the individual who hears the Word, understands it, receives it within, is truly saved, and proves it by patiently producing fruit (see 1 Thes. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:22–25). Not everybody produces the same amount of fruit (Matt. 13:8), but all true believers will produce some fruit as evidence of spiritual life. That fruit may include winning others to Christ (Rom. 1:13), money given to God’s work (Rom. 15:25–28), good works (Col. 1:10), Christian character (Gal. 5:22–23), and praise to the Lord (Heb. 13:15).

This parable shows that Jesus was not impressed by the great crowds that followed Him. He knew that most of the people did not really “hear” the Word and receive it in their hearts. He gave this story to encourage the disciples in their future ministry, and to encourage us today. When you consider how much teaching, preaching, and witnessing goes on in the course of a month or a year, you wonder why there is such a small harvest. The fault does not lie with the sower or the seed. The problem is with the soil. The human heart will not submit to God, repent and receive the Word, and be saved.

“Faith comes first to the hearing ear, not to the cogitating mind,” said A.W. Tozer, the much-quoted pastor and author. Faith is not a matter of IQ or education; it is a matter of humbly preparing the heart to receive God’s truth (James 1:19–21). The wise and prudent are blind to truths that are easy for the babes to understand (Matt. 11:20–26).

**Cole, Stephen (1998) – [www.bible.org/seriespage/lesson-34-superficial-and-genuine-believers-luke-84-15](http://www.bible.org/seriespage/lesson-34-superficial-and-genuine-believers-luke-84-15)**

**Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 224-225)**

4. JESUS’S TEACHING ABOUT VARIOUS RESPONSES TO HIS MINISTRY (8:1–10).

a. *A close band of followers who responded positively* (8:1–3).

8:1–3. Much as the woman had responded positively to **Jesus**, in contrast with Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50), so others responded positively to the message **of the kingdom** which Jesus was **proclaiming** and some responded negatively (8:4–15). The believers included **the Twelve** and a number of **women** who had been recipients of Jesus’ healing power, including **Mary (called**

**Magdalene**; i.e., Mary from Magdala in Galilee) **from whom seven demons had come out**. Often in Scripture the number seven is used to denote completion. Apparently, Mary had been totally demon-possessed. **Joanna**, who was the **wife of one of Herod's** officials, was also singled out, as was **Susanna**. These three and many other **women were helping to support them** (i.e., Jesus and the Twelve) **out of their own means**. This would have been viewed as a scandalous situation in Palestine in that day. However, like the forgiven woman (7:36–50), these women had also been forgiven much and they loved much. They were responding positively to Jesus' message about His kingdom.

b. *Various responses illustrated by the Parable of the Sower (8:4–15) (Matt. 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20).*

8:4. **Jesus** gave this parable and its explanation to show that a number of responses are possible to the Word of God. Luke noted that **a large crowd was gathering** from many towns. The crowd presumably included people who would respond in the four different ways which Jesus was going to set forth in the **parable**. This parable is perhaps a warning to His hearers that obstacles would be ahead of them.

8:5–8. Farmers sowed seed by scattering it by hand over plowed soil. The **seed** of this **farmer** landed on four kinds of soil. **Some** of the seed **fell along the path** and was eaten by **birds**.

Other seed **fell on rock** (i.e., thin soil covering a ledge of rock) and therefore **withered** (v. 6).

Still **other seed fell** on soil which also supported **thorns** and therefore the **plants** were **choked** out (v. 7).

**Still other seed fell on good soil** and brought forth a good **crop** (v. 8).

Jesus ended His parable by calling out, **He who has ears to hear, let him hear**. The term **called out** denotes that Jesus was making the major point of His short discourse. Jesus used “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” on several occasions when telling parables (Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8; 14:35). The expression describes the fact that spiritual people can discern the intended spiritual meaning of a parable. The implication is that unspiritual people would understand no more than the parable's surface meaning.

8:9–10. Jesus' disciples had asked Him **what the parable meant**. But before He told them its meaning, He explained why He used the parabolic form of teaching. People who were spiritually discerning, that is, were following Him and acknowledging His message as true (such as those in 7:36–8:3) would have **the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God**. But others who were not responding to Jesus' message of the kingdom would not understand the parable (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14). In support of this Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9—the people heard what He said but did **not understand** it. Jesus' speaking **in parables** was actually an act of grace to those listening to Him. If they refused to acknowledge Him as Messiah, their judgment would be less severe than if they had understood more (cf. Luke 10:13–15).

**Stein, R. H. (1992). Luke (Vol. 24, pp. 242-245). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

### **Context**

At this point Luke briefly summarized Jesus' ministry of proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom and ministry of healing. This summary is similar to that in 4:40–44, but here Luke mentioned the Twelve and “some women” and even named three of the latter. Since Luke had just referred to Jesus' forgiveness of a woman in the previous account, it may have seemed

natural to mention Jesus' ministry to other women in this summary. In introducing the women, Luke also prepared the reader for the role they would play at the crucifixion (23:49), the empty tomb (24:1–11), and perhaps also in the early church (Acts 1:14).

## Comments

**8:1 Proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.** For “kingdom of God” see comments on 4:43. The reference to God’s kingdom indicates that the message that brings forgiveness, salvation, and peace (7:48–50) is the message concerning God’s kingdom. This is what Jesus had been preaching to the “people of this generation” (7:31). The phrase “proclaiming the good news” in Greek consists of the two verbs “preaching [*keryssōn*] and proclaiming the good news” (*euangelizomenos*). The expression “proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God” is also found in 4:43; 16:16. Earlier portrayals of Jesus’ preaching and teaching ministry are found in 4:43–44; 5:1, 17; 7:1, 24.

**The Twelve were with him.** The Twelve were mentioned earlier (see comments on 6:13), and they will appear more often from this point on.

**8:2 And also some women.** Only one cure of a woman (4:38–39) has been mentioned up to this point, but Luke assumed that his readers knew of Jesus’ ministry to women and that they were to be included in the summaries of 4:40–41 and 6:17–19. Of all the Gospels, Luke records the most prominent appearances by women. That certain women followed Jesus indicates that his attitude toward women was quite different from the attitude of most first-century rabbis (cf. John 4:27). In a sense these women modeled Jesus’ words in Luke 14:26; 18:28–30. Luke frequently paired men and women in his Gospel.

**Mary (called Magdalene).** Magdala, the home of Mary, is not mentioned in ancient sources outside of the NT, and its location is also unknown. The way Luke introduced Mary Magdalene indicates that she was not the same woman mentioned in 7:36–50. She probably was mentioned before the other women because of her being better known.

**From whom seven demons had come out.** Luke mentioned this in order to show the severity of her problem (cf. 11:26) and the greatness of Jesus’ miracle of healing.

**8:3 Joanna.** The only other time Joanna appears in the NT is in 24:10.

**The wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod’s household.** Although Jesus’ preaching found a favorable audience primarily among the poor, some of the wealthy and powerful also welcomed it. Luke seems to have had good information concerning the household of Herod Antipas which may have come to Luke via Joanna.

**Susanna.** This is the only reference to her in the NT.

**These women were helping to support them out of their own means.** These women apparently were well-to-do. The verb “were helping” is the Greek term *diēkonoun* from which we get the word “deacon” (cf. Mark 15:41; Acts 6:1–6). The way the women are introduced in these verses may indicate they were known to the Gospel’s readers.

## The Lukan Message

Within this summary Luke alluded to several theological emphases. These include the coming of God’s kingdom (8:1), a Christological allusion to Jesus’ power to heal and cast out demons (8:2), the visitation of God’s grace to the outcast, for women who were discriminated against (8:3), and the proper use of possessions (8:3). See Introduction 8 (2), (4), (5), and (7).

One other issue is Jesus' encouraging women to listen to his teaching (cf. 10:42) and become part of his ministry, in contrast to common rabbinic practice. In a day when some argue that biblical teaching demeans women, note that women are treated in a most positive manner in Luke-Acts.

## Context

At this point Luke returned to his Markan source. The parable of the soils (cf. Mark 4:1–20) serves as an example of the preaching mentioned in Luke 8:1. Since Luke already included a similar incident in which Jesus taught at the seaside from a boat, he omitted Mark 4:1 (cf. Luke 5:1–3). Within the parable we find several variations from the parallel account in Mark. Luke added that the seed is “trampled on” and gave the immediate cause of the seed on rock withering (no moisture) rather than the ultimate cause (no root to reach down into the subsoil for moisture). He also omitted the description of its withering, that the seed among thorns bore no grain, and the terms “thirty” and “sixty.” These editorial changes are due primarily to Luke's desire to abbreviate the account. The more important Lukan changes are found in the interpretation of the parable and include the omission of the negative statement about the disciples in Mark 4:13; equating the seed with the “word of God”; associating the lack of belief and salvation to the devil's work rather than the form of the teaching (Luke 8:12); and stating that the second type of hearers “believe” and that the fourth hold the word “with a noble and good heart” and “persevere.”

The parable of the sower is one of four major parables found in all three Synoptic Gospels (cf. 13:18–19; 20:9–17; 21:29–31; cf. also 5:34–35, 37–38). This parable is unique in that it contains an extended explanation of why Jesus taught in parables. Unlike the Markan and Matthean parallels, Luke's explanation (8:9–10) does not involve the reason Jesus taught in parables (cf. Mark 4:10–12; Matt 13:10–17) but is simply an explanation of this parable. This is made even more obvious by Luke's omission of Mark 4:33–34. The passage is notoriously difficult, although it is less difficult in Luke than in Mark. Whereas the disciples, and of course those to whom the disciples hand down their interpretations (Luke 1:2), are given the secrets of God's kingdom, others find the parables little more than riddles.

This section concludes with an allegorical interpretation of the parable (8:11–15). Whereas the authenticity of the parable is seldom questioned, critical orthodoxy rejects the authenticity of the interpretation. There are several reasons usually given for this: (1) the unqualified use of the term “word” for “gospel” is not found elsewhere on Jesus' lips. On the other hand this expression is found frequently in the Evangelists' editorial work (cf. 1:2; Acts 4:4; 8:4; Mark 1:45; 2:2; 4:33). (2) A number of words in the interpretation (“to sow” for *to preach* [Mark 4:14], “root” to denote inward stability [Luke 8:13], “for a while” [8:13], “do not mature,” i.e., are unfruitful [8:14], “produce a crop,” i.e., bear fruit [8:15]) are not found elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels. (3) The Gospel of Thomas 9 lacks the interpretation and may witness to an earlier tradition of the parable. (4) The interpretation does not fit the reconstructed original meaning of the parable, which stresses that despite all obstacles God's kingdom will ultimately meet with success, for Jesus' message will be heard and bear abundant fruit. The present interpretation loses this sense of the eschatological harvest found in the unusual harvest numbers. (5) The interpretation implies a situation in the early church where there was a real danger of falling away from one's allegiance to Christ rather than a situation in Jesus' life.

If the interpretation is not authentic, then what we possess is an inspired interpretation of the parable by Jesus' authoritative spokesmen—the apostles and Evangelists. It need not be denied that the interpretation of the parable reflects the situation and vocabulary of the early church. After



all, the Evangelists were interpreters of Jesus' words, not mere stenographers. Luke in particular interpreted this parable in light of his own theological interests. Yet the interpretation does fit the parable well, and the reconstructed interpretation given above under (4) does not really do justice to the parable. Four different soils are mentioned in all three Synoptic accounts, and the amount of space and detail devoted to the first three soils is too great simply to relegate them to story-like embellishments or "local coloring." It also is obvious that in all three accounts the space devoted to the good soil is far less than that devoted to the other soils. As a result, even if there were no interpretation of this parable given in the Gospels, the reader might well raise the question of what the different soils represent; for in the process of interpreting this parable, one tends naturally to ask, What is the reality to which Jesus was comparing the sower, the seed, and the four soils? Each of the Evangelists thought this way, and there is no reason why Jesus could not have thought similarly. As a result, there is no necessity for seeing the interpretation of the parable as a pure creation of the early church.

### Comments

**8:4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming.** Just as the church in Acts would continually increase, the multitudes who eagerly came to hear Jesus also continued to increase. See comments on 4:15.

**From town after town.** This picks up Luke 8:1 and links the account closely with the preceding one.

**He told this parable.** Whereas Mark 4:2 has the plural "parables," Luke concentrated his readers' attention on this particular parable and the need to pay attention to how they heard Jesus' teachings (Luke 8:8, 18).

**8:5 A farmer went out.** In Luke's setting it is unlikely that this is to be interpreted as a reference to Jesus and his preaching ministry, for the sowers of God's word for Luke's readers are the apostles and their disciples.

**To sow his seed.** By the addition of "his seed" Luke may have been placing greater emphasis upon the seed and thus to the gospel message in 8:1. To understand this parable we must recognize that seeding in Palestine generally preceded plowing, so that the path through the field would eventually be plowed (cf. Jubilees 11:11; *Sabb* 73b; *Sabb* 7.2.).

**It was trampled on.** This Lukan comment perhaps refers to "contempt which the word suffers in the world (Heb 10:29)." No reference, however, is made in Luke 8:11–15 to this comment, so that it may be best to see this as an example of "local coloring."

**And the birds of the air ate it up.** The expression "birds of the air" is also found in 9:58; 13:19; Acts 10:12; 11:6. Here they represent the devil (Luke 8:12; cf. also Jubilees 11:11; 1 Enoch 90:8–13; *Apoc. Abraham* 13:3–7).

**8:6 Some fell on rock.** This rock was under a thin layer of soil.

**The plants withered because they had no moisture.** Luke gave the immediate cause of the withering ("they had no moisture"), and Mark gave the ultimate cause (they "did not have much soil," i.e., they had no deep roots to draw moisture from the subsoil when a dry period came).

**8:8 A hundred times more.** Luke abbreviated Mark's "thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." The number is not so large and unrealistic as to require an eschatological interpretation of the parable. The elimination of the thirty and sixty probably is due to Luke's desire to abbreviate the account.

**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.** Both for Jesus and the Evangelists the statement emphasizes the importance of paying heed to how a person responds to the gospel message.

**8:9 His disciples asked him.** This replaces Mark’s more awkward “the Twelve and the others around him.” Although Luke, due to his abbreviation of the account, omitted a change of scene such as we find in Mark (“when he was alone,” 4:10), he envisioned a private conversation between Jesus and the disciples.

**8:10 The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you.** Luke, like Matthew, used the more common “secret(s)” (*mysteria*) in contrast to Mark’s singular “secret.” These secrets refer to different aspects of the arrival of God’s kingdom, which Jesus has shared with the disciples. (For other references to the disciples’ unique accessibility to the divine revelation, cf. 10:21–22; 12:32; 22:29; cf. also Matt 16:17.) “Has been given to you” probably is a divine passive for “God has given to you.” The words “to you” are the first words in the sentence and are thus emphasized. Perhaps this can be revealed better by translating this verse, “*To you* the knowledge has been given.” The disciples chose not only to hear but also to know these “secrets” concerning God’s kingdom. This, however, was not simply for their own benefit but in order that they might be able to make this known to others (Luke 1:3; 24:45–49; Acts 1:8; cf. the condemnation of the Pharisees in Luke 11:52 for not doing this).

**But to others.** The “others” are “those on the outside” (Mark 4:11).

**In parables.** It may be best to translate this adverbially as “enigmatically” or “in riddles” (cf. John 16:25, 29).

**So that.** The key issue in this passage involves the understanding of the Greek term (*hina*) translated “so that.” Does the *hina* clause that follows indicate the “result” of Jesus’ teaching in parables or the “cause.” (In more technical terminology, does the *hina* introduce a consecutive/result clause or a final/purpose clause?) If it is the latter, then Jesus taught in parables for the purpose of hardening the hearts of his hearers. Thus they would not have been able to believe. If this is the correct interpretation, perhaps Luke was thinking somewhat along the lines of Paul when he said, “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom 11:25). If, however, *hina* indicates the result of Jesus’ preaching in parables (cf. Luke 9:45; 11:50), the lack of an obedient response to Jesus’ preaching results in the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Thus what Isa 6:9 said would happen has resulted. For Luke this was more likely because of his emphasis on fulfillment and his omission of Mark 4:12c, which supports the former interpretation. That Luke understood the *hina* as indicating the result of Jesus’ preaching receives additional support from Acts 28:26–28, where Luke quoted Isa 6:9 once again. Here the responsibility for what happens lies clearly upon those who willingly reject the gospel message.