

Luke 8:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Analysis

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. Jesus applies the lamp and revelation teaching with urgent command: **Take heed how ye hear** (blepete oun pōs akouete, βλέπετε οὖν πῶς ἀκούετε)—beware, be careful, pay attention to the manner of your hearing. Not merely that you hear but how you hear—with what heart attitude, attentiveness, and obedience. The four soils illustrate different ways of hearing.

The principle follows: **whosoever hath** (hos gar an echē, ὃς γὰρ ἀν ἔχῃ)—whoever possesses spiritual understanding and receptive heart—**to him shall be given** (dothēsetai autō, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ) more insight, more growth, more fruit. Conversely, **whosoever hath not**—those with hard, shallow, or divided hearts—**from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have** (kai ho dokei echein arthēsetai ap' autou, καὶ ὁ δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ). The verb dokei (seems, supposes) suggests illusion—they think they have truth but possess nothing real, and even that false security will be removed. Spiritual receptivity compounds—good hearers grow, poor hearers lose even apparent understanding. This makes proper hearing eternally critical.

Historical Context

Ancient rabbis emphasized careful listening to teaching. Students sat at rabbis' feet, memorizing and meditating on words—hearing was active, demanding engagement. In a largely oral culture, hearing was the primary means of receiving instruction, making listening skills crucial. Jesus repeatedly emphasized hearing: 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear' (v. 8). The principle of spiritual compound interest appears throughout Scripture—faithful stewards receive more responsibility (Luke 19:17, 26; Matthew 25:29). For Luke's audience, predominantly Gentiles joining the church, this warned against casual hearing or intellectual curiosity without obedient response. The early church faced many who attended teaching but never truly believed (Acts 8:13-24, 2 Timothy 4:3-4). Proper hearing requires humble, persevering, obedient reception of God's word—the good soil response.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does 'take heed how ye hear' mean practically—how can you improve the quality of your hearing of God's word?
2. How does the principle that spiritual receptivity compounds encourage faithful Bible study and discourage casual listening?
3. What does 'that which he seemeth to have' suggest about the danger of false assurance and superficial Christianity?

Interlinear Text

βλέπετε	οὖν	πῶς	ἀκούετε·	ὅ	γὰρ	ἀν	ἔχειν
Take heed	therefore	how	ye hear	that which	for	G302	hath
G991	G3767	G4459	G191	G3739	G1063		G2192
δοθήσεται	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	ὅ	ἀν	μὴ	ἔχειν	καὶ
shall be given	him	and	that which	G302	not	hath	and
G1325	G846	G2532	G3739	G3361		G2192	G2532
δοκεῖ	ἔχειν	ἀρθήσεται	ἀπ'	αὐτοῦ			ὅ
he seemeth	hath	shall be taken	from	him			
G1380	G2192	G142	G575	G846			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:12 (Parallel theme): For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Luke 19:26 (Parallel theme): For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Matthew 25:29 (Parallel theme): For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

John 15:2 (Parallel theme): Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Hebrews 2:1 (Parallel theme): Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Acts 10:33 (Parallel theme): Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Acts 17:11 (Parallel theme): These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Romans 12:3 (Parallel theme): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1 Corinthians 14:37 (Parallel theme): If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:18 (Parallel theme): Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

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