

Matthew 13:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

'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.' Jesus explains principle underlying parabolic teaching: spiritual capacities increase or decrease based on use. 'Whosoever hath' refers to those with spiritual understanding—to them more will be given, producing abundance. 'Whosoever hath not' refers to those lacking understanding—even what they seem to have will be removed. This appears to describe judicial hardening: those who respond to light receive more light; those who reject light lose capacity to perceive truth. Reformed theology sees this as warning about stewardship of revelation: use spiritual capacity and it increases; neglect it and it atrophies. The principle applies broadly: talents, opportunities, knowledge, revelation. Those who respond faithfully receive more; those who don't lose even what they had. The verse explains why some progress rapidly in faith while others, despite equal exposure to truth, remain spiritually dull. It also warns against assuming continued opportunity—reject present light and future light may be withheld.

Historical Context

This principle appears multiple times in Jesus's teaching, including Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:29) where faithful servants receive more while unfaithful servant loses what he had. The context here relates to response to Jesus's teaching: Pharisees and crowds had witnessed miracles, heard teaching, seen

clear evidence—yet many hardened against Him. Result: they lost capacity to perceive truth, while disciples who responded receptively received increasing understanding. Isaiah 6:9-10 (quoted in v.14-15) predicted this pattern: hearing without understanding, seeing without perceiving. Paul references this in Romans 11:7-10 regarding Israel's hardening. Church history shows similar patterns: individuals and cultures that reject gospel eventually lose capacity to understand it—judicial hardening as divine judgment. Conversely, those who treasure and obey God's Word receive increasing insight, wisdom, and spiritual perception. Modern Western church faces this dynamic: generations exposed to gospel but resisting produce subsequent generations increasingly unable to comprehend it.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this principle of spiritual multiplication or atrophy affect your approach to Bible study, preaching, and spiritual disciplines?
2. What evidence indicates you're using spiritual understanding you've received, causing it to multiply rather than atrophy?
3. How should churches respond when people seem to lose even basic spiritual understanding they once had?

Interlinear Text

ὅστις	γὰρ	ἔχει	δοθήσεται	αὐτοῦ	καὶ				
whosoever	For	hath	shall be given	him	and				
G3748	G1063	G2192	G1325	G846	G2532				
περισσευθήσεται·	ὅστις	δὲ	οὐκ	ἔχει	καὶ	ὃ	ἔχει		
he shall have more abundance	whosoever	but	not	hath	and	G3739	hath		
G4052	G3748	G1161	G3756	G2192	G2532		G2192		
ἀρθήσεται	ἀπ'	αὐτοῦ							
shall be taken away	from	him							
G142	G575	G846							

Additional Cross-References

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.

Luke 8:18 (Parallel theme): 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.

Revelation 2:5 (Parallel theme): Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Matthew 21:43 (Parallel theme): Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Luke 16:25 (Parallel theme): But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Mark 12:9 (Parallel theme): What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

Luke 9:26 (Parallel theme): For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

Luke 16:2 (Parallel theme): And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Luke 10:42 (Parallel theme): But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

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