

Matthew 13:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Analysis

'But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.' After describing those who see/hear without perceiving (v.13-15), Jesus pronounces disciples blessed (μακάριοι/makarioi) because they genuinely see and hear. This isn't physical capacity but spiritual perception—they recognize Jesus as Messiah, understand His teaching (with help), and respond in faith. Reformed theology sees this blessing as entirely gracious: they see/hear because God opened their eyes/ears, not because they're superior. The beatitude celebrates divine gift of illumination. What do they see that others miss? Jesus's identity, kingdom reality, God's redemptive plan unfolding. What do they hear? Not mere words but God's voice through His Son. The contrast with v.13-15 is stark: same teaching, miracles, evidence—yet opposite responses. Difference: sovereign grace granting perception to disciples while withholding it from hardened rejecters. The verse provides both assurance (if you see/hear, you're blessed) and gratitude (this is undeserved gift).

Historical Context

Disciples were ordinary Galileans—fishermen, tax collector, zealot—without rabbinic training, theological degrees, or religious pedigree. They possessed no natural advantage explaining their perception. Yet they recognized Messiah while trained scribes and Pharisees missed Him. This fulfilled pattern: God reveals truth to babes while hiding it from wise (Matthew 11:25). Peter's confession (Matthew 16:16) prompted Jesus's explanation: 'flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven' (Matthew 16:17). Divine revelation, not

human insight, produced their understanding. Early church continued experiencing this: uneducated apostles confounded temple authorities (Acts 4:13), simple believers grasped truths that eluded philosophers (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). Throughout church history, God has used unlikely people—uneducated preachers, simple believers, unlikely converts—demonstrating that spiritual perception is His gift. Modern church needs this reminder: theological education and intellectual capacity don't guarantee spiritual insight; humble receptivity to God's revelation does.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What evidence demonstrates you have eyes that truly see and ears that truly hear—beyond intellectual knowledge to heart understanding?
2. How does recognizing this as gracious gift rather than natural capacity affect your pride and gratitude?
3. What responsibility comes with the blessing of spiritual perception—how should those who see/hear respond?

Interlinear Text

ὑμῶν δὲ μακάριοι οἱ ὄφθαλμοὶ ὅτι βλέπουσιν καὶ
are your But blessed G3588 eyes for they see and
G5216 G1161 G3107 G3788 G3754 G991 G2532

τὰ ὡτα ὑμῶν ὅτι ἀκούει
G3588 ears are your for they hear
G3775 G5216 G3754 G191

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 16:17 (Blessing): And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

John 20:29 (Blessing): Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

2 Corinthians 4:6 (Parallel theme): For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Acts 26:18 (Parallel theme): To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

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