

# *Judgment Coming*

FAITH IN JESUS DETERMINES OUR ETERNAL DESTINY.

The first time I was asked to serve as a pastor was of a small, rural church. I soon learned that everyone in the church, including the pastor, was expected to have a garden. My father, who was also a pastor, had gardens when I was a child. The gardening gene apparently skipped a generation. However, I gave it a try.

A retired deacon used his cub tractor to break up the ground and plow the rows for me. My first crop was to be butter beans. I meticulously planted the seed I had bought at the local feed and seed store, making sure the depth of the seed and the space between seeds was what my deacon had taught me. When I finished, I had nice, straight rows with only brown dirt to show for my work.

I watched the rows every day, to no avail. I wasn't even growing weeds. Finally one day, I convinced myself that something had gone wrong. Perhaps I had gotten bad seed. Maybe I had planted the seeds too deep. I decided to dig up a few seeds and assess the situation. When I dug up my first seed, I was surprised to see that the seed had begun to swell and it had roots and stems beginning to develop at the top and bottom of the seed. The seed was doing what seeds are supposed to do. I was just being impatient.

In today's session we will examine Jesus's parable of the seeds and the weeds. The good seed and the bad seed had been sown together. The problem became apparent when the seeds began to mature. The landowner counseled patience in dealing with weeds sown by the enemy. Sometimes we see problems that we feel must be dealt with immediately. However, like the servants in the parable, we may need to exhibit patience, understanding that the Father is in control and He will act at the proper time.

## Matthew 13:1-58

Matthew 13 begins with Jesus leaving the house and teaching by the sea, telling the crowds “many things in parables” (13:3). The classic definition of a parable is “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” Sometimes the details of the parable are significant, and sometimes the details add color to the parable by providing details that flesh out the story. Matthew presented seven parables in the chapter. The last six parables all begin with the phrase “The kingdom of heaven is like” or similar language. The first parable, the parable of the soils and the sower (vv. 3-9), does not have such an introduction. It is tempting to refer to all seven parables as parables of the kingdom, though it is probably better to follow Jesus’s lead in restricting the kingdom parables to the last six.

When Jesus had told the parable of the soils and the sower, His disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the crowd in parables (v. 10). The conclusion of Jesus’s answer was a quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10. This quotation is Isaiah’s commission of what to preach to the nation. The message was one of hard hearts, ears that are hard of hearing, and eyes that are shut. Jesus’s disciples, by contrast, were blessed because their eyes saw and their ears heard (vv. 16-17). Jesus next explained the meaning of the parable of the soils and sower to His disciples (vv. 18-23).

The parable of the wheat and the weeds is the second parable (vv. 24-30). It is followed by the parable of the mustard seed (vv. 31-32) and the parable of the leaven (v. 33). Both of these parables demonstrate the small beginning of the kingdom, followed by the remarkable growth the kingdom will experience. Matthew noted that Jesus taught in parables so that Psalm 78:2 might be fulfilled (Matt. 13:34-35). Jesus explained the parable of the wheat and weeds to His disciples (vv. 36-43).

The parables of the hidden treasure (v. 44) and the priceless pearl (vv. 45-46) both demonstrate the unmatched value of the kingdom. The parable of the net (vv. 47-50) describes the end of the age.

Jesus queried His disciples about their understanding of His teaching (vv. 51-52). They answered in the positive. Jesus then said a teacher of the law (or scribe) who becomes a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like a person who, from his treasure, brings out old and new treasures. What exactly Jesus meant by this saying is debated. Jesus, having finished those parables, left there (v. 53) and returned to His former hometown of Nazareth where in spite of His teachings and miracles the people did not believe in Him (vv. 54-58).

## Wheat or Weeds (Matt. 13:24-30)

Jesus told a parable about wheat and weeds growing together in a field. Concerned, the landowner's servants questioned if they should pull up the weeds. They were told not to pull the weeds for fear of uprooting the wheat also. Only at harvest time could the two be distinguished and separated.

### VERSE 24

**He presented another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.”**

The teaching topic may have been the question concerning why **the kingdom** had not arrived. Why wasn't the kingdom more positively received? Rather, the rising hostility among the Pharisees pointed in another direction. **Them** probably refers to all of the people who were assembled to hear Jesus's teaching and not just to Jesus's disciples.

This parable is the second of seven parables in chapter 13 and appears only in Matthew's Gospel. It is the first of six parables connected with the kingdom of heaven (13:24,31,33,44,45,47). Each of these six parables is connected to the kingdom of heaven by the phrase **The kingdom of heaven may be compared to** (“The kingdom of heaven is like,” NIV) or similar language. What happens in *the kingdom of heaven* is like what happens when a farmer plants **good seed in his field**. The *seed* is initially described simply as *good seed*. In the following verse the seed is identified as “wheat.” Galilee was well-known for its wheat, and wheat was a crucial staple in the Roman Empire. Whereas the parable of the sower and the soils may have been describing a single worker, maybe a peasant farmer, this parable envisions a wealthy landowner with many servants who care for the landowner's fields.

### VERSE 25

**“But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left.”**

The phrase **while people were sleeping** (“while his men were sleeping,” ESV) does not indicate that the workers were guilty of negligence. While the landowner and his men worked in the day and slept at night,

**his enemy** worked under the cover of night because his deeds were evil. *His enemy* may have been a rival farmer, or someone who had a grudge against the landowner. The act of sowing **weeds** among wheat happened often enough that it was illegal in the Roman Empire. The Greek word translated *weeds* could refer to several weeds, though it is generally assumed that the weed in question was called “darnel.” This weed was poisonous and carried a fungus that could attack wheat. Early in its maturation it is difficult to tell the difference between darnel and wheat.

#### VERSE 26

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**“When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared.”**

Nothing that the enemy had done was obvious until **the plants** began to grow. When the ears of wheat began to develop and produce a crop, **the weeds** began to grow as well. As they both grew, it became obvious that the field had been sown twice, once with wheat and a second time with weeds. The servants of the landowner could easily recognize the weeds that were scattered across the field.

#### VERSE 27

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**“The landowner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Master, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?’”**

**The landowner’s servants** would have recognized the problem first, since they spent more time in the fields than their **master** did. Their initial response was to approach the landowner with the problem. Their greeting showed respect (“Master,” CSB, ESV; “Sir,” NIV, NASB). The form of their question **“Didn’t you sow good seed in your field?”** in Greek indicates that the servants expected a positive answer: The servants’ question probably should be understood as “cause good seed to be sown.” The servants likely would have done the actual sowing and would have had firsthand knowledge of the type of seed that was sown. That begs the question, if only good seed was sown, and it was, **“where then did the weeds come from?”**

#### VERSE 28

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**“‘An enemy did this,’ he told them. ‘So, do you want us to go and pull them up?’ the servants asked him.”**

The landowner answered that **an enemy** had sown the weeds in his field. The reaction of the servants was to get rid of the offensive weeds immediately. They wanted to **pull them up** and destroy them.

#### VERSES 29-30

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**“‘No,’ he said. ‘When you pull up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I’ll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to burn them, but collect the wheat in my barn.’”**

The landowner rejected the servants’ solution with a firm **“No.”** Because **the weeds** had been sown among **the wheat**, the root systems from the two plants had intermingled. The roots of darnel are deeper and stronger than the roots of wheat. Therefore, pulling out the weeds would uproot the wheat as well.

The landowner’s solution was to allow the two plants to **grow together until the harvest**. The two would then be separated at the harvest when little damage would be done to the wheat. At the harvest the reapers would tie the weeds **in bundles to burn them**. While the stalks that were bundled were often used for animal food, because of the lack of wood the bundles were also used as fuel for fire. Once the weeds were removed, the reapers could **collect the wheat in** [the landowner’s] **barn**.



#### **Explore Further**

Read the article “Parables” on pages 1215–1218 in the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Revised and Expanded*. How does recognizing the nature of parables help in understanding Jesus’s point in the parable of the wheat and weeds?

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## **Jesus or the Devil (Matt. 13:36-39)**

Jesus explained to His disciples the meaning of the wheat and the weeds, identifying the major characters of the parable. He noted that the wheat represents believers while the weeds represent unbelievers.

## VERSE 36

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**Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”**

Matthew next recorded two brief parables with basically the same message. Both parables emphasize the small beginnings of the kingdom of heaven, followed by remarkable growth. The mustard seed and the lump of leaven appear insignificant because of their size, but the growth of both the mustard seed and the lump of leaven are astonishing (vv. 31-33).

Jesus was still addressing His parables to the crowds who were following Him. Before moving on to the next parable, Matthew made a brief comment about the role of parables in Jesus’s teaching. Jesus’s extensive use of parables was directed toward the crowds (vv. 2-3,34). By addressing His parables to the crowds, Jesus was fulfilling prophesy found in Psalm 78:2.

Matthew noted that Jesus **left the crowds and went into the house**. The *house* probably refers to the house mentioned at the beginning of the chapter (v. 1). In this private setting **His disciples** requested that Jesus **“explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”** The parables themselves were intended for everyone; however, the meaning of the parables was for Jesus’s disciples alone: “Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them” (v. 11).

## VERSE 37

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**He replied, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;”**

The explanation of the parable began with the identification of the elements in the parable. But not every element in the parable is identified and given an interpretation. For example, the sleeping (v. 25), the production of the grain (v. 26), and the servants (v. 27) appear to be elements that round out the parable, while contributing nothing to the meaning of the parable itself.

Jesus first identified the farmer who sowed the good seed as **the Son of Man**. This title was Jesus’s favorite designation for Himself (8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8). As noted earlier, this title has its source in the “one like a son of man” given an everlasting kingdom and dominion by the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:13-14.

## VERSE 38

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**“the field is the world; and the good seed — these are the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one,”**

The field represents **the world**. The word *world* can have several different meanings, though here it refers to the total population of the earth. Jesus’s mission is as broad and expansive as the world itself. God is the force behind the spread of the kingdom. He sows His seed widely.

One might think that the **good seed** would represent words about the gospel that tell about the kingdom. However, the *good seed* represents **the children of the kingdom** and the **weeds** represent **the children of the evil one**. The *children of the kingdom* are those who respond positively to the message of *the kingdom* (salvation through Jesus Christ) and, thus, belong to the kingdom. The *children of the evil one* are those who respond negatively to the message of *the kingdom* and, thus, belong to *the evil one*. Just as the wheat and weeds were allowed to grow together until the harvest, so the children of the kingdom and the children of the evil one are allowed to grow (live) together to avoid uprooting the children of the kingdom. No one who lives in this world, that is the entire population of the world, can avoid the conflict between good and evil; there is no middle ground from which one can avoid making a choice between the kingdom of heaven and the evil one. Those who belong to the kingdom and those who belong to the evil one exist side-by-side in the world. They will continue to grow together until the final judgment.

## VERSE 39

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**“and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.”**

The last three elements found in this parable are **the enemy** who is **the devil**, **the harvest** which is **the end of the age**, and **the harvesters** who are **angels**. The same Greek word translated *harvesters* here is translated “reapers” in verse 30. The two terms—*the evil one* (v. 38) and *the devil*—are used interchangeably in Matthew. *The end of the age* refers to the final judgment when the weeds and wheat will be separated. *Angels* are frequently associated with the final judgment. “For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father” (16:27). “He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” (24:31). “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,

then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (25:31-32). The Son’s angels wait patiently for the Son’s command for the harvest to begin.



### Explore Further

Read the article “Kingdom of God” on pages 964–966 in the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Revised and Expanded*. What are the characteristics of the kingdom of God? How is the kingdom of God

- different from the church?

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## Heaven or Hell (Matt. 13:40-43)

Jesus explained that at the end of the age He will send His angels to separate believers from unbelievers. Those who have rejected Jesus will enter eternal punishment. Genuine believers will enter the Father’s eternal kingdom.

### VERSE 40

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**“Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.”**

Jesus now began to address the main point of His parable. The two words **just as** emphasize the nature of the comparison. The weeds being **gathered and burned in the fire** represent what will occur **at the end of the age**. Those who chose the evil one rather than the Son of Man will experience the fiery judgment. “Fiery judgment will be the lot of those who have chosen to follow ‘the evil one,’ and though they seem to flourish now, at ‘the end of the age’ the truth will win out.”<sup>1</sup>

### VERSE 41

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**“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom all who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness.”**

Usually the **kingdom** is attributed to the Father (the kingdom of God), though occasionally Jesus referred to “my kingdom” (Luke 22:30).



Notably Jesus discussed **his kingdom** with Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world . . . If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here” (John 18:36). The Son of Man’s kingdom, the kingdom of God, signifies the rule of God in the world in the hearts and lives of His people.

Matthew recorded another description of how Jesus would come: “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30).

The task of Jesus’s **angels** will be to **gather** the children of the evil one, those who are to be removed from His kingdom: **all who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness**. The Greek word translated *cause sin* refers to a trap or a snare that was used to capture something alive. It can also refer to that which causes one to stumble or is considered offensive. Here it probably refers to any person or thing “that trap people and lead them into captivity to sin.”<sup>2</sup> The Greek from which the phrase *guilty of lawlessness* is translated literally means “to practice lawlessness.” These people are “those who have no regard for God’s laws and freely transgress them.”<sup>3</sup>

#### VERSES 42-43

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**“They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s kingdom. Let anyone who has ears listen.”**

When the angels complete the gathering together of those who freely practiced lawlessness, they will throw them into **the blazing furnace**. At the end of the age, the wicked will justly be subject to fiery punishment. Jesus used the phrase **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth** to describe the intensity of the punishment. *Weeping* probably refers to a sadness at being punished. *Gnashing of teeth* could refer to torment, utter despair, or intense pain. Occasionally the phrase “outer darkness” is added to the description of the wicked person’s punishment (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). Jesus left no doubt as to the fate of the sinful and lawless ones. Another image often used to describe the fate of the eternally lost is the Greek term *geenna* (Gehenna; translated as “hellfire,” 5:22; “hell,” 5:29-30; 10:28; 23:15,33).

Once the angels have separated the lawless for punishment, then **the righteous** will be rewarded. The word *righteous* does not imply earned

status before God (Eph. 2:8-10). Rather, these are children of the kingdom, redeemed by the Son. Their reward will be that they **will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom**. The Greek word translated *shine* occurs only here in the Greek New Testament. Paul used similar language in describing the Philippian believers: they were “blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world” (Phil. 2:15). Similar language is also found in Daniel: “Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life and some to disgrace and eternal contempt. Those who have insight will shine like the bright expanse of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:2-3).

The contrast between the lawless and the righteous is stark. The light for those who practice lawlessness is the light from **the blazing furnace**. Their source of light is also their source of punishment. Those who are righteous *shine like the sun*; they reflect the glory of God and will live in His presence for eternity.

The section ends with a call for the people to consider carefully the teaching that they have heard: **“Let anyone who has ears listen.”** The emphasis on listening highlights the importance of heeding Jesus’s teaching. It is obvious that those who ignore Jesus’s warning do so at their own peril. This parable makes clear that there will be a judgment. Those who heed and act on the words of the Messiah (who by faith in Jesus are made right with God through Jesus’s sacrificial death on the cross) will spend eternity in the Father and Son’s kingdom. Those who choose to live in sin and ignore both God’s call to repentance and His offer of salvation in Jesus will be separated from the Father forever.



### **Explore Further**

What is the significance of the phrase “Let anyone who has ears listen” at the end of this section? What should we be listening for? How should we respond to Jesus’s call to listen?

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1. Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 534.

2. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 357, footnote 99.

3. Osborne, *Matthew*, 534.

# *The Sermon on the Mount*

BY JOSEPH R. CATHEY

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) is one of the best-known and yet most complex sermons that Jesus preached to His followers. The sermon has received wholehearted praise—even from non-Christians such as Mahatma Gandhi in his struggles with the British Empire and civil disobedience.<sup>1</sup> Interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount are legion in their existence. “One recent survey has itemized thirty-six different interpretations” of what Jesus actually meant when He preached this sermon.<sup>2</sup> While exploring in depth the roots and contextual meanings of the Sermon on the Mount would be fascinating, space will not permit such an undertaking.

## **Setting**

Let us first examine the location and terrain where Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount. Scholars believe the crowd gathered to hear Jesus’s sermon on a hillside overlooking the upper northwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee.<sup>3</sup> If this location is correct, then Jesus preached this sermon not far from Mary Magdalene’s home and directly across from the scene of the Gadarene demoniac and the ensuing mass swine drowning. Evidence dating to the fourth century AD indicates that some Christians believed this particular place was indeed the location for the sermon.<sup>4</sup>

The setting would have afforded Jesus both a height to look out over the upper end of the Sea of Galilee as well as a view southwards toward the sloping landscape. The location has a unique amphitheater-type quality. That is, the natural lay of the land forms a distinctive bowl or semi-oval shape just below the crest of the mount. This terrain would have naturally amplified Jesus’s voice as He addressed the masses. Picture Jesus sitting just below the crest of the rising hill, His voice echoing into and across the natural amphitheater. This was the setting for one of history’s most thought-provoking sermons.

## Structure

What many recognize when examining the Sermon on the Mount is the symmetry of a carefully constructed sermon containing subjects that would have been familiar to most Jews of the first century AD. A close examination of the text reveals at least three major sections that give meaning to the instructive nature of the sermon.

The first major section begins with the Beatitudes and receives further illustration by the “salt and light” metaphor (5:1-16). “Beatitudes” is simply Latin for “blessings.” Matthew shows how Jesus clearly linked “blessings” with those whose behavior was consistent with a “better” or “deeper” righteousness that He was demanding. Some have argued that the Beatitudes are antitheses of the Law. A close reading of the text, however, shows these not as antithetical but rather fulfilling of Mosaic Law.<sup>5</sup> A surface reading of the Beatitudes could lead one to conclude Jesus was urging His believers to be separate from the world. This ascetic lifestyle was far from what Jesus was advocating, a fact made clear by His salt and light metaphors.

Salt was abundant in the first century AD and had a variety of beneficial uses. Primarily in this context salt was for seasoning food—being mixed in with that which had no or little flavor or being used as a preservative. Clearly Jesus used the metaphor of salt to illustrate the need for His followers to use their redeemed lives to stem the tide of moral decay of their society.

Light, in the biblical text, is one of the more complex metaphors to define. In this case, however, Jesus clearly set the context for His light metaphor. John records Jesus’s proclamation, “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). As Christ is the light of the world so His disciples should reflect His function and foci in their lives in order to overcome moral decay. So in these two metaphors, we do not see diverse meanings but rather complementary ideas that spur Christ’s disciples to be His agents of change in the world.

The second major section addresses the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law (Matt. 5:17-6:4). Introducing this section, Jesus stated clearly that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but rather to fulfill them (v. 17). In order to illustrate His fulfillment of the Law, Jesus cited issues such as murder, adultery, divorce, lex talionis (the law of retaliation), love for enemies, and giving to the needy—all elements of the Mosaic Law. “Even more fundamental to the six illustrations is Jesus’ role as sovereign interpreter of the law, as he himself fulfills it (v. 17). He alone, therefore, has the authority to declare how each part of the law will apply to his followers.”<sup>6</sup> He was (and is) the fulfillment of the Law of Moses;

with a booming voice echoing down to the Sea of Galilee Jesus declared the Law fulfilled in Him. As we read the portion of the text that deals with the Law, we are convicted that in order to live up to Jesus's expectations we must be led by the Spirit lest failure seize us as impotent believers.

The third major section (Matt. 6:5–7:27) identifies the righteous acts that Christ's followers are called to do both inwardly and outwardly. This section explains “who” we are as Christians. Teaching on praying persistently (complete with the Model Prayer, 6:9-15), fasting, laying up treasures in heaven, having security in Christ, judging others, understanding the narrow gate to eternal life, bearing spiritual fruit, and recognizing the wise and foolish builders all help us understand who we are in Christ. Jesus used these actions to unite “who” and “what” we are in Him. Rather than contradictory, they are complementary actions of a Christian who is salt and light, who is fulfilling the Mosaic Law (via the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, see Gal. 5:16-23).

One of the most moving and yet clarifying parts in this section is the Model Prayer (also known as the Lord's Prayer). Matthew includes the prayer as part of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. Luke, however, describes the disciples asking Jesus to teach them to pray. Jesus responded by offering an abbreviated version of the same prayer (Luke 11:1-4). The two accounts show that Jesus, more than once, instructed His followers with this eloquent prayer. In this Model Prayer is the reflection again of being a disciple, salt and light, and of living the Christian life through the power of God.

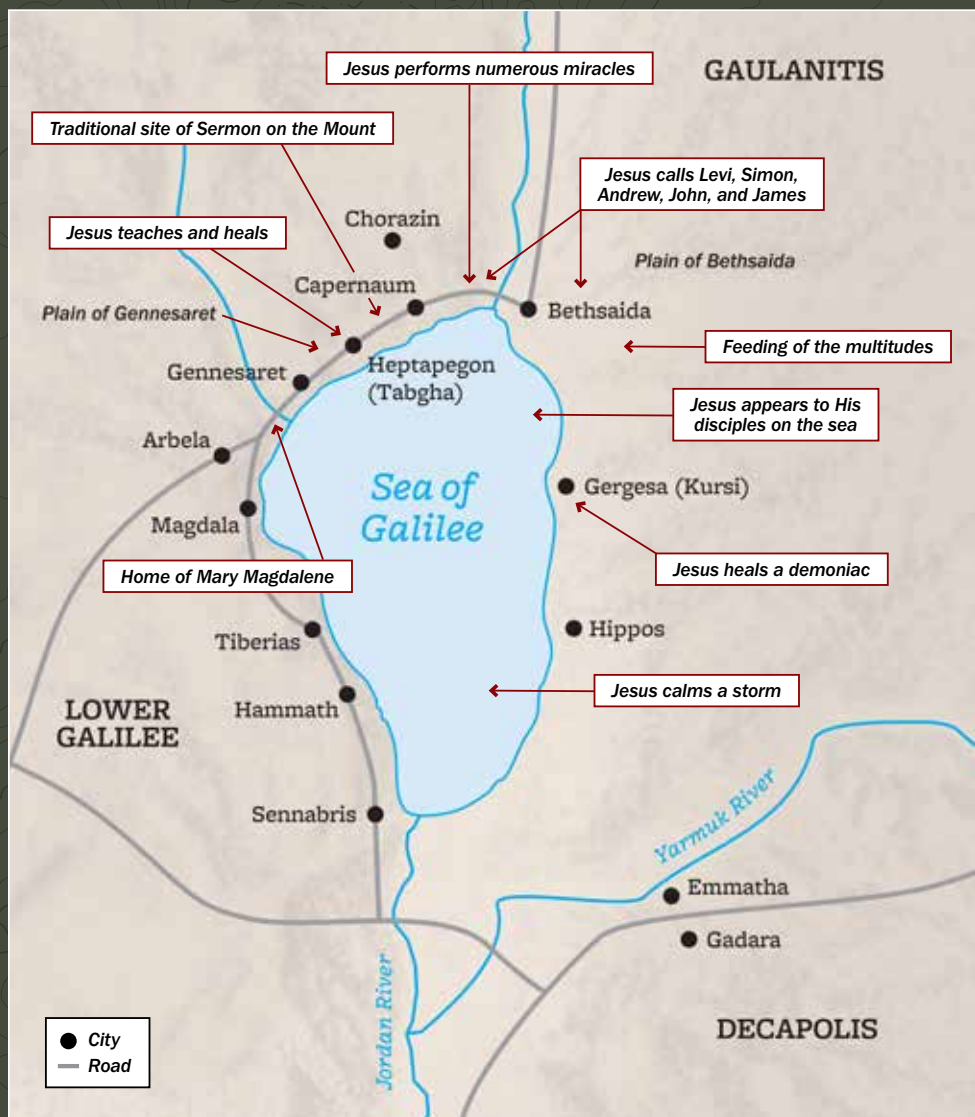
## Significance

At the high-water mark of Jesus's early ministry, He drew a large group of people and began to teach them—near the crest of the mountain. This would change history forever. His voice amplified—carried by the terrain—would carry to them words that would radically challenge their theology and lives. The evidence? “When Jesus had finished...the crowds were astonished at his teaching, because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes” (Matt. 7:28b-29). Further, His words in this sermon still amaze and challenge us today.

1. Sharon Kay Dobbins, “The Principles of Equity and the Sermon on the Mount as Influence in Gandhi's Truth Force,” *Journal of Law and Religion*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1988): 131–136.
2. See Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 94-95.
3. See Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 354.
4. See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700* (New York: Oxford, 1998), 279–80.
5. Glen H. Stassen, “The Fourteen Triads of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21-7:12),” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 122, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 270.
6. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 106.

This is an edited version of the article that originally appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*.

# Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee



## MATTHEW 1-13

When high school and college students are interested in a certain career path, they often shadow an expert in that field for a day or two. It gives them a better feel for the job's requirements and a clearer understanding of what will be expected. They learn what to do by watching the example of one who's walked that path already. For Christ followers, we have no greater example than what we see in the life of Jesus. By listening to His words and watching His actions, we learn the do's and don'ts of living out our faith. As you study Matthew 1–13, you'll get a firsthand account of what it's like to walk with Jesus each day—and learn what it means to become a citizen of God's kingdom.

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