



# “Art Thou He that Should Come?”

Matthew 11-13

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## Introduction

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These chapters include one of Matthew’s five ‘books’ or sections of his writing that remind us of Moses’ five books in the Old Testament. In this, the third book, Jesus faces opposition to his teachings and ministry from Jewish leaders and he begins to teach in parables as the concluding sermon for that section.

## Outline of Matthew

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Matthew seems to break his work into seven sections (seven representing perfection): a prologue and climax, with five middle sections, each concluding with a major discourse by Jesus. This makes it similar to the five books of Moses. Thus an overall outline for the book of Matthew is as follows (with the focus of this lesson in bold):

1. Prologue—Birth and Infancy (1-2)
2. Proclamation (3-4); Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
3. Galilean ministry (8-9); Missionary discourse (10)
4. **Opposition (11-12); Parables (13)**
5. Christ and the Church (14-17); Church life and order (18)
6. Jerusalem (19-23); Eschatological discourse (24-25)
7. Climax—Passion, Death, and Resurrection (26-28)

Note: In each lesson on the gospels, where there are overlapping or parallel texts, those will be noted in the heading. References in bold are the preferred reading(s) and will be the principal section of analysis, though some unique points in the current gospel will be noted, as well as helpful JST changes.<sup>1</sup>

## Opposition (11-12)

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This section portrays the increasing tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. John was praised (11:7-15), after his disciples saw how Jesus did the mighty works of the Messiah (11:2-6). Jesus declared “woe” to the cities who had rejected him (11:20-24) but thanks the Father for the faithful disciples who were with him (11:25-27). This section concludes with the famous and unique Matthean “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me...For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (11:28-30) to those who repent and follow Jesus’ teachings.

Jesus defied Pharisaic Sabbath rules twice, first by picking grain (12:1-8), then by healing a man with a withered hand (12:9-13). Part of the healing is the unique Matthew query about pulling a sheep out of the pit (12:11-12). As Jewish opposition grew (12:14), he gained increased popularity with the people (12:15-16). Matthew alone quotes Isaiah 42:1-3, saying this scripture about the Gentiles trusting in “my beloved” was fulfilled in Jesus (12:17-21). He healed a man who was possessed, blind, and dumb (12:22-23). The Jewish leaders charged him with doing all this by Satan’s power (12:24), but he refuted them (12:25-30). When asked for a sign, Jesus said adulterous people seek for signs, but gave them two anyway, both relating to Gentiles—Jonah and the repenting of Ninevah (12:39-41) and the queen of the south who came to learn from Solomon (12:42). Finally, he declared that his followers are his family (12:46-50).

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<sup>1</sup> Not all JST changes are noted, only those of textual or doctrinal interest. Interested readers are encouraged to see Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament* or the manuscripts themselves on the Joseph Smith Papers website ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)).

## John's Disciples Visit Jesus (Matt 11:1-6; Luke 7:18-23)

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11:1 **had made an end of commanding.** Matthew used phrases like this to indicate the end of the five sermons that he records Jesus giving (with the reference to the sermons and the ending phrases below):

- The Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7; 7:28)
- The message to the apostles prior to their missions (chapter 10; 11:1)
- The parables (chapter 13; 13:53)
- The 'community rules' (chapter 18; 19:1)
- The 'apocalypse' (chapters 23-25; 26:1, which appropriately notes that now Jesus has finished "all these sayings" since it was his last sermon)

Matthew deftly alternates between Jesus 'saying' and 'doing' (though many of the 'doing' sections also include things he said, but in briefer format than the sermons). The 'saying' sections are distinct, continuous sermons and are offset by standard phrases that let the reader or listener know where they start and end.

11:1 **when John had heard in the prison.** John was held in Herod's stronghold of Machaerus, five miles east of the Dead Sea (see Matt 14:1-12).

11:2 **sent two of his disciples.** John sent two disciples, not because John had any doubts about Jesus, but because he wanted these disciples to gain their own testimony. Instead of directly answering their question, Jesus let his actions speak for themselves. Note that the oldest manuscripts just have the plural "disciples" but not the number two; this may be a later effort to harmonize Matthew and Luke on this point.

11:3 **Art thou he that should come.** The Greek *erchomai* is the verb "to come." In Matthew, it becomes a title, 'the coming one.' It may originate from Psalm 118:26 ("Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord"). In this context, it refers to John the Baptist's testimony that one coming after him is who his disciples should follow (Matt 3:11-12).

11:4 **Go and shew John.** Matthew's literary flow is beautiful, using this short account to summarize events of the previous chapters (Matthew 5-11). In verse 5, he reminded John's disciples—and thus all of us—that they have both *seen* and *heard*:

- "The blind receive their sight" (Matthew 9:27-31; see Isaiah 35:5; 29:18)
- "The lame walk" (Matthew 8:5-13; 9:2-7; see Isaiah 35:6)
- "The lepers are cleansed" (Matthew 8:2-4)
- "The deaf hear" (Matthew 9:32-33; see Isaiah 35:5-6; 29:18)
- "The dead are raised up" (Matthew 9:18-26; see Isaiah 26:19)
- "The poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 5-7; see Isaiah 61:1; 29:19)

Thus John's disciples and we can testify that Jesus is the indeed the Messiah, for he has met the scriptural and traditional requirements for what the Messiah will do when he comes.

## Jesus Declares John to be Elijah (Matt 11: 7-19; Luke 7:24-35)

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11:7 **as they departed, Jesus began to say.** As John's disciples left to report back what they now knew about Jesus, the Lord made it very clear to his audience what he thought of John. John was a prophet, but "more than a prophet" (v. 9)—"there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (v. 11). Why was John greater than other prophets? Because no other man had the opportunity to prepare the way for the Messiah; no other man had the privilege of baptizing the Messiah; no other man stood at both the end of one era and the beginning of another, the last legal administrator to which even Jesus submitted himself. If the Jews didn't accept John, they were damned.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Matthews, *A Burning Light*, 101-102, quoting Joseph Smith (*Teachings*, 275-276).

11:11 **he that is least.** But Jesus also said that “notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” To whom is he referring? Joseph Smith is recorded to have said that Jesus was speaking of himself, for though he was the Son of God, he made himself the least in the kingdom by his humble submission to the will of the Father. He was also viewed with low esteem by many around him.<sup>3</sup>

11:12 **the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.** This is a challenging verse; Luke equivalent is 16:16 – “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” Joseph Smith offered an alternate translation of this verse in Matthew: “the kingdom of heaven hath power and authority and by that they take or enter legally and lawfully the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>4</sup> Another version recorded that John “took it by force, or wrested it from the Jews.”<sup>5</sup> The KJV sense is probably alluding to the violence by which John was arrested and soon will be killed, and which would come in Jesus’ life as well.<sup>6</sup>

11:13 **JST**

Matt 11:13 KJV	JST
For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.	<b>But the days will come, when the violent shall have no power; for all the prophets and the law prophesied that it should be thus until John. Yea, as many as have prophesied, have foretold of these days.</b>

Picking up on the KJV language of v. 12, JST Matthew has Jesus declare that the days of violence against the kingdom of God will come to an end with the coming of John the Baptist, as prophets have stated. All prophets have foretold of this day.

11:14 **this is Elias, which was for to come.** “Elias” is the Greek version of the name Elijah, who was prophesied (Malachi 4:5-6) to come as a forerunner of the Messiah. Jesus declared that John the Baptist was an Elijah and prepared the way for Jesus. This prophecy was also literally fulfilled when Elijah himself came to the Kirkland temple and restored keys to help prepare for the world for the Second Coming (D&C 110).

11:16 **whereunto shall I liken this generation?** Shifting from his discussion about John somewhat, Jesus compared what people said about him and John to children playing in the marketplace in the city and whining or pouting because other children are not playing the game the way they want. John didn’t ‘play’ because he was austere, and they said he had a devil; Jesus associated with others and they called him a drunkard.

11:19 **wisdom is justified of her children.** “But wisdom is proved right by her deeds” (NIV). In the oldest NT manuscripts, the word is *ergōn*, meaning ‘works’ or ‘deeds,’ not *teknōn* in the later manuscripts such as those used by the KJV. “Wisdom” is often personified in Hebrew literature (e.g., Proverbs 8). This proverbial phrase means that in spite of the criticisms, John’s and Jesus’ actions will, in the end, prove to be correct.

### Woes upon Galilean Cities (Matt 11:20-24; Luke 10:12-15)

Matthew 11 is a transition chapter, moving from a time of preaching and miracles to a time of persecution leading up to his ultimate persecution, his crucifixion. As part of that transition, he bemoans the rejection he has experienced in Galilee, especially in the three towns where he spent the most time.

11:21 **Chorazin.** Two and a half miles north of Capernaum, Chorazin was a small town with a small, black basalt synagogue (like Capernaum). It was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt in the fifth century, then destroyed

<sup>3</sup> "History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843]," p. 1459, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 13, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/102>.

<sup>4</sup> "Discourse, 23 July 1843, as Reported by James Burgess," p. [10], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 13, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-23-july-1843-as-reported-by-james-burgess/3>.

<sup>5</sup> Jackson, *Joseph Smith’s Commentary*, 88; see also Smith, *Search, Ponder, and Pray*, 153.

<sup>6</sup> Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 38; Coogan, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 1762.

again in the seventh or eighth century but not rebuilt. There is no mention in the NT of Jesus going there, yet this condemnation requires that he went perhaps multiple times.

11:21 **Bethsaida**. Meaning 'house of fishermen', there are three candidates for this town, which was the birthplace of Peter, Andrew, Philip, and perhaps other apostles. There is also the possibility that there are two towns with this name. The first is four miles northeast of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, and the second town, constructed by Philip, was a few miles north of the other, called Bethsaida-Julias (not on the Sea of Galilee today but perhaps was then?). This city name is mentioned more in the New Testament than any town except Jerusalem and Capernaum. If there are indeed two, the city Jesus condemned here is perhaps Philip's more Greek city, not the humble fishing village, which is the scene of several events in Jesus' life.<sup>7</sup>

11:22 **Tyre and Sidon**. These were two Gentile cities on the Mediterranean Sea. They were powerful maritime and commercial centers and were proverbial for wicked, pagan cities deserving of the judgment of God.

11:23 **Capernaum**. Jesus' home during most of his ministry, which made it "exalted unto heaven," but ultimately rejected him, which "brought [them] down to hell." Many of the great teachings and miracles of the gospels happened in or near this town.

11:23 **Sodom**. The city destroyed in the days of Abraham, it was symbolic as the ultimate city of sin.

### Come unto Me (Matt 11:25-30; Luke 10:17-24)

11:25 **At that time**. The JST adds a fascinating change to start this verse and section: "**And at that time there came a voice out of heaven; and Jesus answered and said...**" The change of subject is triggered by a heavenly voice. Though we are not told what the voice said or who was speaking, from the context we can suppose that it said something about the disciples, about which Jesus commented next.

11:25 **hast revealed them unto babes**. The setting for this exclamation by Christ in Matthew is a transition phrase between the berating of the Galilean cities and the "Come unto me" verses (28-30). Similar verses in Luke are given as a result of the Seventy returning successfully from their missions. "Babes" is the Greek *nēpios*, meaning 'infant' or 'not of age,' but also 'unskilled' or 'unlearned.' The opposite word is *sunetos*, meaning 'learned,' and which is translated "prudent" in this verse (the word translated "wise" is *sophos* in Greek).

11:27 **to whomsoever the Son will reveal him**. In the KJV, it shows the close relationship of the Father and the Son.

#### 11:27 JST

Matt 11:27 KJV	JST
All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and <del>he</del> to <del>whomsoever</del> the Son will reveal <del>him</del> .	All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and to <b>whom</b> the Son will reveal <b>himself, they shall see the Father also</b> .

The JST changes this verse to highlight the close relationship of the Father and the Son. In other words, if Jesus reveals a full understanding to you of who he is, then at the same time you will see and understand the Father.

11:28 **Come unto me**. A paraphrase would be: 'Come near to me, all who are weary, tired, or struggling, and who are weighed down with troubles, and I will relieve and refresh you.' We draw near to Jesus by entering into his kingdom, making covenants of obedience with him, studying his words, and laying our pains, sorrows, problems, and sins at his feet. As we do this, he lifts our burdens and puts them on his own shoulders, and we are relieved of suffering.

11:29 **Take my yoke**. Or, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Jesus is not asking us to bear the load alone. A yoke ties together *two* oxen and lets

<sup>7</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 1:74.



them both carry the load. He is inviting us to join with him in carrying the load, since he is already yoked to the other side. As we do that, we will 'learn *from* him' (better than 'of' for *apo* here) that he is gentle and humble, and that he carries most of the load, making it feel light and easy to us. Sharing the load with Jesus actually makes the new yoke feel like a great rest compared to the old burden of sin we were carrying. See Alma 7:11-13.

11:30 ***my yoke is easy***. Or, 'For my yoke is pleasant, and my burden is easy to bear.' Why? Because he has paid the price for us, he has atoned for our every mistake, and he has redeemed us from prison. He shoulders the whole price for when we fall short, and all he asks of us is repentance and our best efforts to live his teachings. In short, the yoke is light for us because he pulls all the weight through the Atonement and our repentance.

### The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5)

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Honoring the Sabbath day has always been a mark of those who are the covenant people of God. By Jesus' day, the Pharisees had developed elaborate rules about Sabbath activities in order to ensure that they did not violate the simple commandment of keeping the Sabbath day holy, such as walking no more than one-half mile (more was considered 'work'). Jesus often took opportunities to call out the excessiveness of the 'fence' the Pharisees especially had built around the Law (*halakot*, or binding interpretations), challenging their notions of Sabbath violation by simplifying it and focusing more on what is in our hearts than what we do on that day. In other words, Jesus did not challenge the Law but the Pharisaic interpretation of it. He was more concerned about human needs than Sabbath laws.

12:1 ***ears of corn***. The Greek word here is 'grain'; they were walking through fields of grain, most likely wheat, and picking heads of grain with their hands, then eating them. The Law allowed for this (see Deuteronomy 23:24-25) but the Pharisees were upset (v. 2) because plucking the grain, separating it from the husk, and grinding it between their hands so they could eat it violated several of the thirty-nine prohibited classes of work on the Sabbath, based on their interpretation of the Law. They could also point to Exodus 34:21 as a justification.

12:3 ***Have ye not read***. On many occasions, Jesus was quick to challenge the difference between the actual commandments in the scriptures and the rules that Jewish leaders had piled on top of them. Here he gave two examples (the second one is unique to Matthew) of apparent Sabbath violation that teachers of his day considered fully justified—David taking the showbread from the temple in a time of need (v. 4; see 1 Samuel 21:1-6) and priests breaking certain Sabbath rules each week to officiate in the temple on that day (v. 5).<sup>8</sup> If David and the priests were justified in their actions, then wouldn't the disciples also be correct in their action as they did the work of the Lord, especially since he to whom the temple was dedicated was with them (v. 6)?

12:7 ***what this meaneth***. Only in Matthew, Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6a: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." This in turn alludes to the encounter with Saul and Samuel in 1 Samuel 15, where Samuel explained to the errant king: "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). Jesus said that if his critics truly understood this, they would not condemn his disciples, "the innocent."

12:8 ***the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath***. Jesus is Lord ('possessor' or 'controller') of the Sabbath because he first created it and lived it at the time of the world's creation.

### Healing of a Man with a Withered Hand (Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11)

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12:10 ***that they might accuse him***. Having been unsuccessful in tripping him up on the eating rules, the Pharisees took a different approach. The rabbis had determined that to give medical help to someone on the Sabbath was only allowed if the situation was life threatening. Since the man with the withered hand had suffered from this for a long time, his life was clearly not threatened, so they were anxious to see what Jesus would do. Here he again challenged the accepted beliefs about the Sabbath law, affirming that doing good to one another took precedence over the added-on rules they had put above the law.

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<sup>8</sup> Some believe this alludes to the circumcision of babies that happens on the eighth day after their birth, even if that is a Sabbath day, but the language here seems to point more to actions in the temple.

12:11 **lay hold on it, and lift it out.** In this comment only found in Matthew's account of this story, Jesus discussed helping an animal on the Sabbath. Interestingly, in Jesus' day, there were some that would argue that the act of helping an animal out of a pit on the Sabbath was *not* appropriate, such as the Essenes of Qumran.<sup>9</sup> But they would certainly be a minority; most would agree with Jesus' assessment that it was acceptable to help an animal fallen into a pit. The scripture Jesus referred to was Deuteronomy 22:4.

12:12 **Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.** Jesus' approach to the Sabbath was a bit radical but also very practical. With this being a focus from Church leadership of late, we've also had many opportunities to reflect on our Sabbath practices. I hope we always recognize that it is good to "do well" on the Sabbath and make that part of our weekly worship.

12:13 **Stretch forth thine hand.** Jesus only asked the man to show his hand to the room, which he did, and then everyone saw it was no longer withered. Jesus did not touch him or otherwise offer any care that would have violated Pharisaic Sabbath rules.

12:14 **held a council against him.** The Pharisees from this time met together to see "how they might destroy him," acting under the auspices of Exodus 31:14 and 35:2, but surely motivated by personal hatred of someone who would mock their rules and teachings.

### [My Servant \(Matt 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12; Luke 6:17-19\)](#)

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12:15 **he withdrew himself.** Faced with life-threatening opposition, Jesus went to a place where he could teach and heal without persecution, though he instructed those with him not to talk about it, perhaps to keep his location a secret (v. 16).

12:18-21 **Behold my servant.** Matthew uniquely cited Isaiah 42:1-4 (not 1-3 as the footnote says) as being fulfilled by Jesus' withdrawal and blessing of the multitudes. The mention of the Gentiles perhaps gives a clue where Jesus went (Decapolis?), or at least that his audience included non-Israelites. This is the longest such OT citation in Matthew's book.

### [Beelzebul \(Matt 12:22-32; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:14-15, 17-23\)](#)

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12:22 **possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb.** While Mark and Luke have this story,

12:23 **Is not this the son of David?** In other words, the Messiah, the king of Israel, because Jesus displayed power over devils and disease.

12:24 **Beelzebub.** See Bible Dictionary, "Beelzebub." This Phoenician god was considered the prince of all evil spirits, and so first century Jews came to associate the name with Satan. The association of Jesus with Satan and sorcery continued among the Jews for hundreds of years. The proper spelling is *Beezebul* or *Beezeboul* in the NT.

12:25 **Jesus knew their thoughts.** Several times in the gospels, Jesus was able to perceive the thoughts of those around him. This is manifest in how he responds to their secret conversations directly, even though he is not physically able to hear them.

12:25 **divided against itself.** A proverbial phrase that brings to mind a truth that everyone accepted and would have seen firsthand with the division of Herod the Great's kingdom among his sons and the antagonism they displayed toward each other.

12:27 **by whom do your children cast them out?** Not literally their own children, but referring to his followers who also exercised power over evil spirits. This is made clear in the JST version of verse 28, which adds at the end:

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<sup>9</sup> The Damascus Document states, "...if it [an animal] falls into a well or a pit, he may not lift it out on the Sabbath...Any living being who falls into a body of water or a cistern shall not be helped out with the ladder, rope, or other instrument" (Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 69).

“...for they [the ‘children’ of verse 27] also cast out devils by the Spirit of God, for unto them is given power over devils that they may cast them out.”

12:31 **shall be forgiven.** Not all sins are automatically forgiven. The JST explains, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men **who receive me and repent.**”

12:31 **blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.** Joseph Smith said that this only applies to sons of perdition who get that way because they: 1) Receive the Holy Ghost; 2) Receive open visions and revelations from heaven; 3) Know God; and, 4) Still sin against God.<sup>10</sup>

### A Tree and its Fruit (Matt 12:33-37; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10; 6:43-45)

12:33 **Either make the tree good . . . or else make the three corrupt.** You cannot declare someone good and bad at the same time. Jesus cannot be a good teacher and a charlatan who fakes his healings. Joseph Smith cannot be an amazing American religious leader and someone who lied about and fabricated the whole Book of Mormon. “The tree is known by his fruit,” Jesus declared. See also Alma 5:36.

12:34 **how can ye, being evil, speak good things?** Jesus reversed the argument for them. If you are evil, how can you speak “good things” and teach truth; even if something you say is true, your voice cannot be trusted because it is fundamentally evil.

12:35 **the good treasure of the heart.** “Of the heart” is not in the Greek and is not in modern translations. The meaning is that good things come from a good treasury (or storehouse) and evil things come from an evil treasury, another illustration of the point of the last two verses.

12:36 **every idle word that men shall speak.** “every careless word they speak” (ESV). The meaning of “idle” is ‘lazy’ or poorly considered.’ Not just things we do but things we say (even when no one is listening?) will be brought to light in our day of judgment.

12:37 **by thy words thou shalt be justified.** To be “justified” means to be ‘made righteous,’ which is being forgiven of sins through the Atonement. Seeking forgiveness and humbling ourselves before God—through words—brings that forgiveness. Similarly, our evil words will condemn us.

### The Pharisees Seek a Sign (Matt 12:38-45)

12:38 **Master, we would see a sign from thee.** The Pharisees addressed Jesus as “Teacher” (Greek *didakalos*), which is a positive honor challenge (they didn’t believe he merited the title but used it as a challenge to him), then asked him for a sign—a miracle. The request from the Jewish leaders was purely a public challenge that he do something on demand to demonstrate his identity.

12:39 **An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.** Though not quoting a scripture, the imagery draws on Deuteronomy 1:35 and 32:5.<sup>11</sup> Many people had sought miracles at the hands of Jesus, but this is perhaps the first time someone has asked for a sign of his authority just for the sake of seeing it.

12:39 **the sign of the prophet Jonas.** “Jonas” is Jonah of the OT. Jesus has a similar confrontation in Matt 16:1-4, where he uses this same expression about the sign of Jonah but without the longer explanation. Likewise in Mark 8:11-12, Jesus has the same question from the Pharisees but responds that they will get no sign (no mention of Jonah). But Luke’s explanation is longer, like Matthew’s, indicating that they were both drawing on a longer source than Mark (or each other).

Jonah didn’t give a sign to the Ninevites but was the sign himself—his being saved from the large fish and given a second chance to fulfill his mission conveyed the message to the people of Nineveh that God could forgive them, too. Jesus evoked Jonah’s experience, alluding to his own future time in the tomb, but also using it to show that

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<sup>10</sup> *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358.

<sup>11</sup> Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 44-45.



Nineveh repented from the prophet's words while the scribes and Pharisees were rejecting the very one that sent Jonah on his mission and saved him from the fish.

12:40 **three days and three nights**. According to Matthew's (and the other gospels') accounts, Jesus was not "in the heart of the earth" for three days *and* three nights, just two nights. But the phrase in their culture was proverbial and meant any part of three days, which enables it to fully apply to Jesus' death.<sup>12</sup>

12:41 **men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment**. "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment" (NASB). Meaning, as the people of Nineveh and Israel stand together before God for judgment, the Ninevites will be able to declare that they repented when all they had was Jonah testifying, but the people of Israel had "a greater than Jonas" and still did not repent.

12:42 **The queen of the south**. Meaning the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13), who came to hear and test Solomon's great wisdom. Through her observations of his words and deeds, she accepted it as a blessing and a manifestation of the greatness of the Lord, and left great gifts.

12:43 **JST**

<p><b>Matt 12:43 KJV</b> When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.</p>	<p><b>JST</b> <b>Then came some of the scribes and said unto him, Master, it is written, that, Every sin shall be forgiven; but ye say, Whosoever speakth against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. And they asked him, saying, How can these things be? And he said unto them, When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. But when a man speaketh against the Holy Ghost,</b></p>
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The JST often adds background questions and circumstances to Jesus' statements. In this case, the scribes are coming back to him with questions about something he taught in Matt 12:31-32 about the unforgiveable sin.

12:43 **the unclean spirit**. This is a parable of sorts, responding to the question about blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (see JST change above). Evil spirits in Jesus' time and place were thought to live in the desert, though always seeking a better "home" or a person they can possess.

12:44 **JST**

<p><b>Matt 12:44 KJV</b> Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth <del>it</del> empty, swept, and garnished.</p>	<p><b>JST</b> Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth <b>him</b> empty, swept, and garnished; <b>for the good spirit leaveth him unto himself.</b></p>
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From the JST change in v. 43, we see that this is describing the condition of a man who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost, which is an unforgiveable sin. Since he has rejected the Holy Ghost ("the good spirit"), he is empty and ready for possession by an evil spirit.

12:45 **taketh with himself seven other spirits**. Seven represents completeness. Now that the man has wholly given himself over to evil, he is completely or fully possessed by evil.

12:45 **so shall it be also unto this wicked generation**. Those who have fully rejected Jesus in his day could find this parable of possession relevant to their own situation, returning to the judgment verses at the beginning of this section.

<sup>12</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 1:81.

## The Family of Jesus (Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21)

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12:46 **his mother and his brethren stood without.** Jesus' mother and siblings came trying to talk to him, but he was surrounded by the crowd and they couldn't reach him (per Mark and Luke). Jesus used the opportunity to make a point: those who faithfully keep the commandments are part of Jesus' family, and thus enjoy the blessings of his Father—eternal life and exaltation.

12:50 **brother, and sister, and mother.** Note that Jesus added "sister" to the list, a clear reference to his desire to include women in his ministry and in the blessings that his message offered. The plural term "brethren" in previous verses encompassed both men and women; here he broke it down individually because discipleship is an individual effort. See also 3 Nephi 11:15 where they each encounter Jesus "one by one."

## Parables (13)

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In this collection of eight parables in Matthew 13, Jesus' focus is teaching how people come into the kingdom of God and how the kingdom grows. For his parables, Jesus drew on everyday images of his rural upbringing—farming, agriculture, and the gap between the rich and the poor.

After the Jewish leaders plotted to take Jesus' life (Matthew 12:14), Jesus changed his public teaching style—he delivered his sermons in parables that hid his message from the spiritually immature but conveyed truth to his followers. Thus the discourse for this section is 13:1-52, a collection of parables that emphasize the themes of the universal victory of God, the certainty of judgment, and the separation of the true disciples from the world and the synagogue (portrayed physically as Jesus finished the discourse separately and alone with his followers in v. 36). Five of the parables presented here are unique to Matthew:

1. Parable of the weeds among the wheat (traditionally, the wheat and the tares, 13:24-30, 36-43)
2. Parable of the field (hidden treasure, 13:44)
3. Parable of the pearl (of great price, 13:45-46)
4. Parable of the net (13:47-50)
5. Parable of new and old treasures (13:51-52)

## The Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:1-9; Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8)

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Though called the parable of the sower (based on the name Jesus gave it in v. 18), we might think of it as the parable of different kinds of ground (or Parable of the Soils<sup>13</sup>), which is more the focus than the sower himself. This first parable teaches about spiritual responsiveness and the responsibility we have to receive the word of the Lord in our lives and embrace his teachings and commandments.

13:1 **sat by the sea side.** Jesus sat because he was prepared to teach. See also v. 2, where he shifted to a boat because of the larger crowd. The traditional location for this is an inlet called today the "Cove of the Parables." About one mile south of Capernaum, the land forms a natural amphitheater with excellent acoustics to address a large crowd from just off the shore, as is described here.<sup>14</sup>

13:2 **the whole multitude stood on the shore.** Jesus sat to teach and the crowd stood to listen, showing respect for what he was teaching.

13:3 **parable.** Greek *parabolē* meaning 'setting one thing beside another, to form a comparison.' The corresponding Hebrew word is *mashal*, meaning a perplexing saying that is meant to stimulate hard thinking. The bulk of Jesus' parables in Matthew are in this chapter, though he offers some more in chapters 21-22.

13:3 **a sower went forth to sow.** We're not told the kind of seed he used, but it was likely wheat, given the description of the method of spreading the seed, which was clearly 'broadcast' style, scattering it in all directions

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<sup>13</sup> Smith, *Search, Ponder, and Pray*, 157.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 1:82-83.

while walking through the field. Typically the farmer would plow the field first into furrows, then spread the seed, then plow it again between the furrows to cover the seed. In the process of doing this, the seed would get scattered on hard paths and trails where birds could eat it, on rocks in and around the field, and among other plants that might be growing at the edge of the field.

13:4 **And when he sowed.** Some see this parable as linked to the commandment in Deuteronomy 6:3-4, called the *Shema* (which means ‘hear,’ the first word). There Moses says that we are to love God with our heart, soul, and might. Thus the seed on the path is related to the heart, the seed on rocky soil to the soul, and the seed among thorns to the might. The comparison is strengthened by Jesus’ call to “hear” in v. 9.<sup>15</sup>

13:4 **fell by the way side.** The “way side” are the pathways where people walk between the fields. The dirt is compact and continues to be trampled on, giving the seeds no opportunity to grow before they are devoured by birds. The sower does not avoid scattering the seed and is not fearful that some will be lost, though he knows that’s exactly what will happen.

13:5 **fell upon stony places.** In many cases, farming was done on terraces cut into the side of a hill. Here the topsoil might be thin, with an underlying layer of rock sometimes just a few inches down, making it difficult for the plant to get a good root system and retain moisture.

13:6 **they were scorched.** On a rocky surface, the ground retains no moisture, so a hot sun would quickly wither the small plants and kill them.

13:7 **some fell among thorns.** Thorns and other weeds would be on the edges of the fields, where the plow can’t reach. A heavy growth of weeds would not give any room for a seed to sprout and grow.

13:8 **hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.** These are varying degrees of success, as measured by the number of grains produced by each seed. Today, with modern farming methods, most fields get 25-30 grains per plant, with some as high as 50 or in rare cases 75. Yields of 100 grains per plant are extremely unusual. Genesis 26:12 tells us that Isaac’s crop was blessed by God when it brought forth a hundredfold, so that’s a nearly miraculous harvest.

The Reason for Teaching in Parables (Matt 13:10-17; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10)

13:11 **given unto you to know the mysteries.** Jesus started to use parables that he began to face strong opposition for two reasons. First, parables have the power to conceal things from those who are not prepared or listening to the Spirit. Second, parables have the power to reveal things to those with willing hearts and open minds. Most parables were given to ‘outsiders’ with explanations given privately to the disciples, as Mark says, “And when they were alone, he expounded all things unto his disciples” (Mark 4:34).

13:12 **JST**

Matt 13:12 KJV	JST
For whosoever <del>hath</del> , to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever <del>hath</del> not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.	For whosoever <b>receiveth</b> , to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever <b>continueth not to receive</b> , from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

The emphasis is on the receptivity of the heart of the disciple, not on what they possess. As we are open to receiving more (revelation, knowledge, understanding) we will receive “more abundance.”

13:14-15 **the prophecy of Esaias.** Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 from the LXX, a portion of Isaiah’s call that emphasizes the ultimate futility of his efforts, for the people will not listen. Matthew uses this to show that even as Jesus teaches truth through parables, those not prepared (or privately tutored, as the disciples) will not understand.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *Search, Ponder, and Pray*, 157.

13:16 **for they hear.** At the end of this verse, the JST adds, “**And blessed are you because these things are come unto you, that you might understand them.**” The disciples are blessed not just by their hearing the parables but by their understanding them, which signifies application of the understanding.

### The Parable of the Sower Explained (Matt 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15)

13:18 **Hear ye therefore the parable.** After a reciting a parable that likely is based on a daily recitation that the Jews call “Hear,” a condemnation of those who will not hear, and an invocation of blessings on those who do, Jesus give an imperative: *Akousate*, or “Hear.”

13:19 **then cometh the wicked one.** In the parable, the birds eat the seeds on the path, the “way side.” Jewish literature of the day often equated the devil with an evil bird that could swoop down and attack.

13:20 **anon.** Or, ‘immediately.’

13:21 **by and by he is offended.** “By and by” is the same word in Greek as in verse 20 (translated “anon” there) and means immediately. “Offended” is *skandalizō* in Greek, a marvelous work that literally means to put something in another’s way (such as a ‘stumblingblock’). We get “scandalized” from the same root. It is thus better translated ‘falls away’, ‘is led into sin’, or ‘gives up believing’.

13:23 **into good ground.** The pattern is one of progression. The hard path makes it nearly impossible for any seed to grow, and the seeds are just food for the birds. The rocky soil looks promising at first but cannot sustain growth when things get hot or dry. The patch full of weeds has the potential to grow something (just look at the weeds!), but the wheat can find no place to grow there, competing as it does with the other plants. Even the good ground itself has varying yields, some spots better than others, depending on the richness of the soil, the drainage, the amount of sun, etc. We are to liken the soil to our hearts, our commitment to God, and ask, ‘What kind of soil are we? What kind should we be? How can we become like the ground that yields 100 grains per seed planted?’

Bruce McConkie suggested a different title for this parable:

Jesus in this parable teaches that to reap the harvest of eternal life men must: (1) Plow, harrow, fertilize, and in all respects prepare the soil of their hearts to receive the word of God; and (2) Nurture, cultivate, and care for the sown seed so that the sprouting plant will mature and bring forth an hundred fold.

Our Lord’s emphasis is not on the sower or the seed, but on the soil. The seed is the word of God, the gospel, the truths of salvation, and all these are ever the same. But whether the seed sprouts depends upon proper planting in prepared soil; whether it matures depends upon the continued care given the growing plant. Thus, in view of the message taught, this parable aptly may be considered as the Parable of the Four Kinds of Soil (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:288).

A comparison with some of the concepts in Alma 32 is also valuable. Consider particularly Alma 32:37-39:

37 And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say: Let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit.

38 But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

39 Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree, therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.

The burden is on us to be receptive ground for the seed, which God will surely plant in us, because he is merciful and never-changing, and treats all men and women equally. He gives us full opportunity to hear and accept his

gospel, and the only things that can keep faith and truth from growing in our lives are our own decisions, our own preparation, our own willingness to be fertile ground.

## The Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat (Matt 13:24-30)

This parable is only found in Matthew. See verses 36-43 for an explanation.

13:25 **tares**. A plant called today 'bearded darnel', a rye grass that, in its early stages, appears so similar to wheat that farmers cannot tell them apart and so leave them both in the field. The tares' seeds are poisonous. The roots of the two are also often entangled, so even if you could tell them apart, pulling up the tares will damage the wheat crop. But as the plants mature, the wheat head is clearly distinguished from the grassy tare and can be harvested separately. Then the stubble of both is burned and the field is prepared for the next planting.<sup>16</sup>

13:25 **his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat**. It would be quite challenging to sow seeds at night in a land with nothing but hand-held lamps to see. This was a determined enemy, and a known one because as soon as the weeds are noted in the field (v. 26-27), the sower knows the enemy did it (v. 28).

13:29 **Nay; lest while you gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat**. Though it impacts productivity overall, there will be less waste to wait unto the end to harvest everything together.

13:30 **JST**

Matt 13:30 KJV	JST
Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.	Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the <b>wheat into my barn, and the tares are bound in bundles to be burned.</b>

The JST changes it so the wheat is first gathered into the barn, then the tares are bundled and burned, which matches more naturally the way the farmer would have dealt with this problem. See the following for a fuller discussion.<sup>17</sup>

This parable in Matthew 13 was first recorded in the translation effort probably in April or May 1831, and was first written fundamentally as it stands in the King James Version.<sup>18</sup> The key verse (30) had no changes: "Let both grow ~~till~~ <untill> the harvest and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat into my barn."<sup>19</sup> Shortly after that, John Whitmer made a copy of the first New Testament manuscript and kept the wording exactly the same.<sup>20</sup> After the brethren completed the work on the New Testament at the end of July 1832, they turned their attention back to the Old Testament.<sup>21</sup> However, Joseph and Sidney continued to make revisions in the New Testament manuscript until 2 February 1833.<sup>22</sup> Sometime during this review, the words "gather ye

<sup>16</sup> Frank K. Judd Jr., "The Parables of Matthew 13: Revealing and Concealing the Kingdom of God," in Holzapfel and Wayment, *The Life and Teachings*, 2:82; Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 1:85-86.

<sup>17</sup> David A. LeFevre, "The Education of a Prophet: The Role of the New Translation of the Bible in the Life of the Joseph Smith," in Craig James Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara Morgan Gardner, *Foundations of the Restoration: The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*. Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2016, 111-112.

<sup>18</sup> There were some minor changes that do impact the meaning of the text, such as changing "which" to "who" in verse 24 and dropping the word "was" from verse 26 to smooth out the reading.

<sup>19</sup> New Testament Revision 1, p. 34, in Faulring and others, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*, 192.

<sup>20</sup> New Testament Revision 2, part 1, p. 25, in Faulring and others, *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible*, 267.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Smith declared the translation work on the New Testament done in his letter to W. W. Phelps, dated 31 July 1832: "We have finished the translation of the New testament great and marvilous glorious things are revealed, we are making rapid strides in the old book [Old Testament]." Letter to William W. Phelps, 31 July 1832, in *JSP*, D2:267.

<sup>22</sup> Minute Book 1 has an entry dated 2 February 1833 by Frederick G. Williams that states, "This day completed the translation and the reviewing of the New testament and sealed up no more to be broken till it goes to Zion." Minute Book 1, page 8, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/minute-book-1#!/paperSummary/minute-book-1&p=12>.



together first the tares & bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat into my Barn” were crossed out in the New Testament and a note was pinned over the text as follows: “Gather ye together first the wheat into my barns, and the tares are bound in bundles to be burned.”<sup>23</sup>

On 6 December 1832, Joseph Smith personally wrote in his own journal, “December 6th translating and received a Revelation explaining the Parable the wheat and the tears [tares] &c.”<sup>24</sup> The resulting revelation (D&C 86) gives a marvelous latter-day interpretation of the parable, including the same reversal of the order of the harvest expressed on the pinned note. Both the pinned note and the original revelation were in the handwriting of Sidney Rigdon, especially significant because Frederick G. Williams was the principal scribe for the translation in December 1832.<sup>25</sup> Though we don’t know the date of the pinned note with certainty, the journal entry for the revelation gives the impression of cause and effect—“translating and received a Revelation.” It is reasonable then, that, like section 76 and similar experiences, the change was first made to the biblical text by inspiration, which then triggered the larger revelation recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The reversal of the order was significant to the message of the Restoration. About a year previous, the Lord had told the Church to “flee unto Zion” and “flee unto Jerusalem.” They were to come “out from among the nations” and “from the midst of wickedness,” separating themselves from the wicked, “which is spiritual Babylon” (D&C 133:12–14; see also verses 4–5, 36–38, all of which focus on the Church’s mission and message to gather the righteous out of the wicked world). This then became a main mission of the Church and drove the Prophet to send missionaries abroad and men to preach the gospel in many nations. Changing the parable to gather the wheat first aligned with that vision and mission and was good doctrine. D&C 86 put the interpretation squarely in a latter-day context: “But behold in the last days, even now while the Lord is beginning to bring forth his <the> word, and the blade is springing up and is yet tender,” the angels are anxiously waiting to start the harvest. But the Lord refrains them: “Pluck not up the tears while the blade is yet tender (for verily your faith is weak) lest you destroy the wheat also, therefore let the wheat and the tears grow together until the harvest is fully ripe then ye shall first gather out the wheat.”<sup>26</sup>

A couple of years later, Joseph Smith explained it this way: “We understand that the work of the gathering together of the wheat into barns, or garners, is to take place while the tares are being bound over and preparing for the day of burning.”<sup>27</sup> The wheat may be first, but both types of harvest are the work of the latter-days.

## The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32)

13:32 **when it is grown, it is the greatest.** This parable and the next one about leaven fundamentally teach the same truth: the kingdom starts small and almost insignificant, but will one day grow and be a mighty force. So it was in Jesus’ day, so it is with the Restoration of the gospel today. What started out with six members in 1830 is today nearly 16 million and growing at the rate where one analysis projected membership of 265 million by 2080, second only to the Roman Catholic Church.

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<sup>23</sup> New Testament Revision 2, part 1, p. 25, in Faulring and others, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 267; emphasis added.

<sup>24</sup> Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 11.

<sup>25</sup> New Testament Revision 2, part 1, p. 25, in Faulring et al., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 267n1 explains that the pinned note was “in Sidney Rigdon’s handwriting.” Though we don’t have the original copy of D&C 86, the early copy made by Frederick G. Williams affirms that it was “written by Sidney [Rigdon] the scribe an[d] Counsellor.” Revelation, 6 December 1832 [D&C 86], in *JSP*, D2:327. Williams was the scribe for the Old Testament work then going on and some of the New Testament revisions, but Rigdon did much of the revision writing. Faulring and others, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible*, 59.

<sup>26</sup> Revelation, 6 December 1832 [D&C 86], in *JSP*, D2:326; see D&C 86:4–7.

<sup>27</sup> *Messenger and Advocate*, December 1835, 226–29, cited in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Joseph Smith’s Commentary on the Bible* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 95.

13:32 **the birds of the air come and lodge**. Related OT references include Psalm 104:12; Ezekiel 17:22-24; 31:2-18; Daniel 4:9-27.

### The Parable of the Leaven; Teaching in Parables (Matt 13:33-35; Mark 4:33-34)

13:33 **leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal**. “yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour” (NIV). This was a significant amount of food, likely to last her and her family many days. A very small amount of leaven made the whole thing raised bread dough that she could use to make bread.

13:35 **I will open my mouth in parables**. Though some ancient manuscripts of Matthew say, ‘the prophet Isaiah,’ there isn’t a quote from Isaiah that says this. Rather, it is the Septuagint (LXX) version of Psalm 78:2, which is more expanded than the KJV of that verse: “I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter dark sayings which have been from the beginning.”

### Explanation of the Weeds among the Wheat (Matt 13:36-43)

13:36 **Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house**. “Then he left the crowds and went into the house.” It’s not so much that he sent them but that he just left them there pondering what he had taught them in parables, and went home (either his own house or Peter’s home in Capernaum).

13:36 **Declare unto us the parable of the tares**. Jesus had offered a private explanation of the parable of the sower, so the disciples sought the same kind of intimate explanation for this parable as well. It is curious that they selected this one and not the others he had taught. Was it because it was more complex, or the imagery just more challenging to discern? They offer no hints for their reasons.

13:37 **the Son of man**. In Matthew, Jesus’ use of this title more clearly refers to himself than it does in Mark’s book. Jesus is the sower.

13:38 **the good seed are the children of the kingdom**. The “children of the kingdom” are those who follow the Sower, the opposite of the “children of the wicked one.”

13:39 **the harvest is the end of the world**. It was not an immediate event in their lives, nor likely in ours. The “end of the world” (*synteleia anōnos*, the end of the age) will be spoken of more by Jesus in Matthew 24-25, but represents the final judgment and winding up scenes of God’s plan for this earth.

### 12:39 JST

Matt 12:39 KJV	JST
The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; <del>and</del> the reapers are the angels.	The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world, <b>or the destruction of the wicked</b> ; the reapers are the angels <b>or the messengers sent of heaven</b> .

Joseph Smith did not know Greek, but this clarification is great Greek, for the word ‘angel’ in Greek (*angelos*) primarily means ‘messenger’ and is only applied to angels secondarily. These changes are also reflected in verses 40-41 (end of the world in v. 40 and angels and messengers in v. 41).

### 12:42 JST

Matt 12:42 KJV	JST
And shall cast them <del>into a furnace of fire</del> : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.	And shall cast them <b>out among the wicked: and</b> there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth, <b>for the world shall be burned with fire</b> .

Verses 41-42 describe something *other* than the tares or weeds, which were already gathered and burned in v. 40. Now the angels of the Lord are gathering from *inside* the kingdom “all things that offend [*skandalon* again, those who put up stumblingblocks], and them which do iniquity [*anomia* or those living without the law (because they

rejected it]]” in order to add them to the ranks of the wicked (the tares) in order to prepare the world to be “burned with fire.” Similar changes are found in vv. 49-50.

12:43 **the righteous shine forth as the sun.** Only after all these wicked souls are dealt with do the justified (the “righteous”) finally have the opportunity to have light of themselves like the sun, as they reside in the “kingdom of their Father.” Compare Daniel 12:3 where the wise “shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,” and Alma 40:25, which quotes it.

12:43 **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.** The repetition of this phrase draws our attention to the concept; we are to hear, which in the ancient world meant also to act on what we hear.

### Parables of the Field, the Pearl, and the Net (Matt 13:44-50)

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13:44 **treasure hid in a field.** This parable and the other three were given to the disciples privately after their explanation of the wheat and tares parable. Here a man finds a treasure in a field that he does not own. The nature of the treasure is not specified but the man considers it so valuable that he sells everything he possesses in order to purchase the field and have legal access to the treasure.

13:46 **one pearl of great price.** Like the man who found the treasure, this merchant found something very valuable that he had to have, so he sold everything to attain it.

13:47 **like unto a net.** Similar to wheat and tares, the net is cast into the sea and brings in many fish, which have to be separate out, the good and the bad fish. The bad fish are thrown out, since they are not worth anything to the fisherman (v. 48).

### New and Old Treasures (Matt 13:51-52)

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13:51 **Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.** I’m not sure that is a fully honest answer, but perhaps like those fearful of giving the wrong answer, the disciples just nodded and moved on. The more we study the parables that Jesus gave, I believe we’ll come to see deeper meaning and more applicability to our own lives.

13:52 **JST**

Matt 13:52 KJV	JST
Then said he unto them, <del>Therefore</del> every scribe <del>which</del> <del>is</del> instructed <del>unto</del> the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man <del>that is an</del> householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure <del>things</del> new and old.	Then said he unto them, every scribe <b>well</b> instructed <b>in the things of</b> the kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder, <b>a man therefore</b> , which bringeth forth out of his treasure <b>that which is</b> new and old.

Commenting on their answer that they understood the parables (v. 51), Jesus likened his disciples to scribes who had been taught “the things of the kingdom of heaven.” “The true disciple knows how to draw spiritual truths from the parables properly, to balance the new teachings of Christ with the fulfilled promises of the messianic kingdom, and to understand how Jesus truly fulfills the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:17).”<sup>28</sup>

### Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Matt 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:16-30)

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See Luke.

13:53 **Jesus had finished these parables.** This phrase marks the end of Jesus’ third speech in Matthew (out of five).

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<sup>28</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 1:87.

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- ESV – English Standard Version
- JST – Joseph Smith Translation
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- NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
- NLT – New Living Translation
- NRSV – New Revised Standard Version

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