

Together with Jesus

Week Seven – Matthew 13 and 14
Parables and Miracles



Warm Up

Outside of crucifixion/resurrection, what is Jesus best known for?



Matthew 13:1-9

Parable of the Sower

Jesus goes to the seaside and is followed by crowds. Much like in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sits down and begins to preach to the people, but this time using what would become a signature rhetorical method, the parable.



Question: How would you define what a “parable” is?



Matthew 13:10-23

Purpose and Explanation of Parables

The disciples admit to being confused about the parable. Jesus explains the purpose to them using Isaiah 6. After he does this, He gives the specific explanation to the parable of the Sower.

Question: Imagine being Jesus' disciple. What questions are you left with after Jesus' explanation?

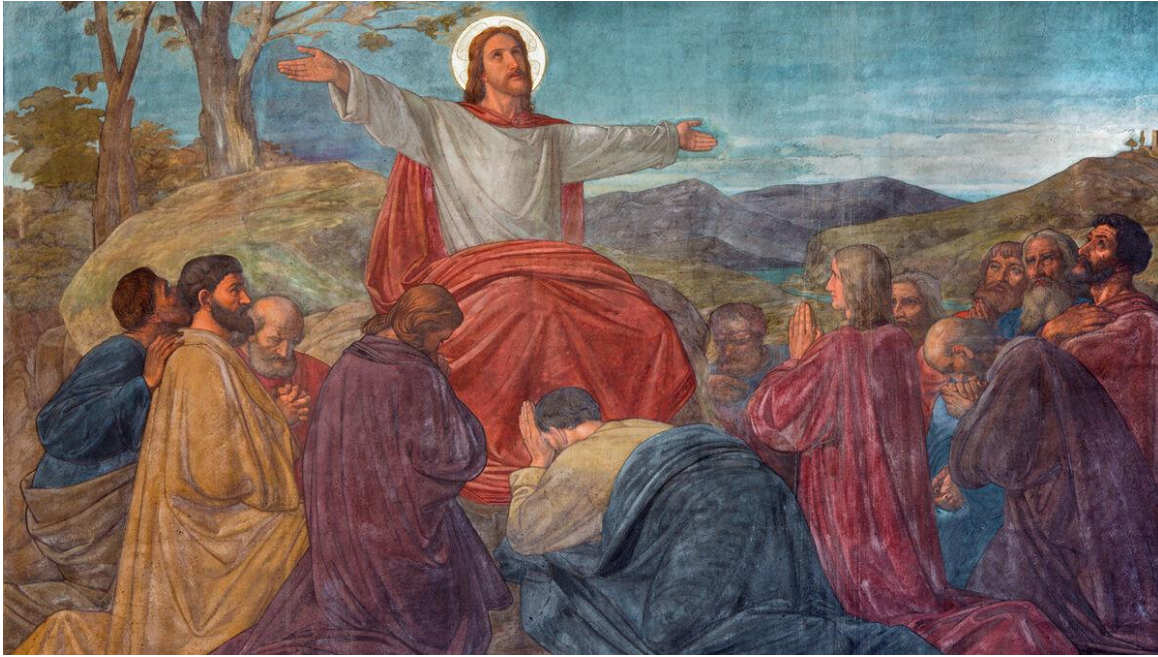
Matthew 13:24-35

Everything in Parables

After explaining parables to His disciples, Jesus continues on with parables including the parables of the weeds (tares), mustard seed, and leaven. Matthew explains that this fulfills prophecy. Notably, all of the parables are explaining a concept of “the Kingdom of Heaven” to the people.



Question: What is the Kingdom of Heaven, as best as you can understand it from these parables?



Question: If some are supposed to hear but not understand, why does Jesus explain the parable?

Matthew 13:36-43

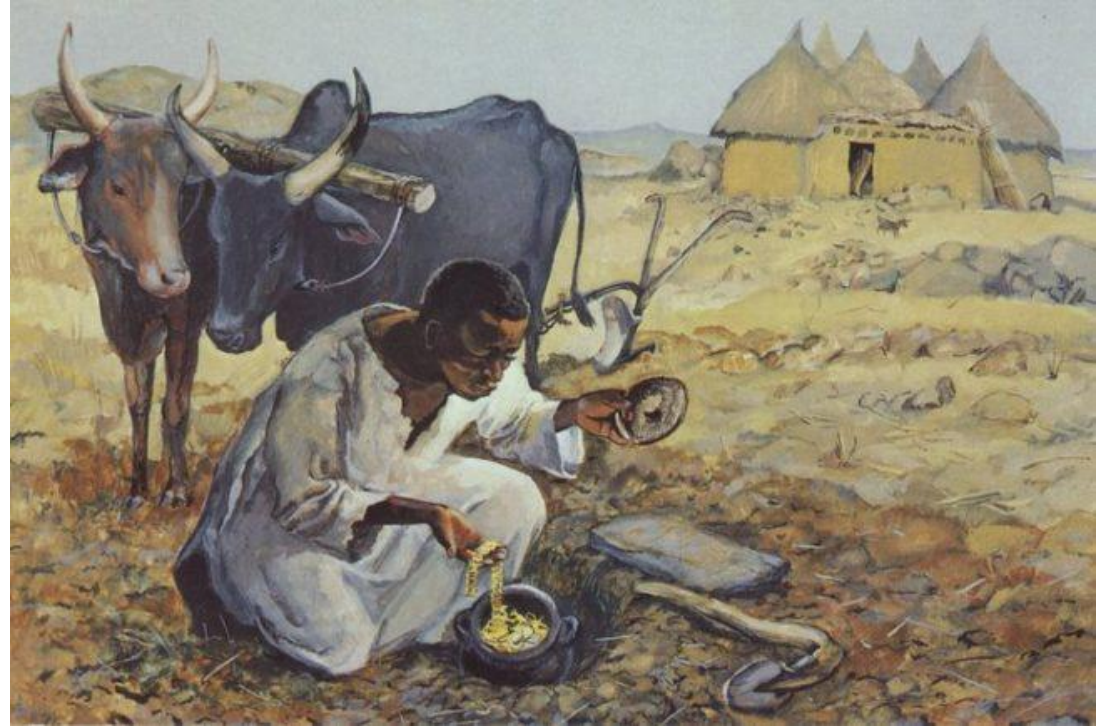
Parable of the Weeds explained

The disciples, once again confused by the parables, ask Jesus to explain them. Jesus gives a quick explanation and follows it up with the same line from the parable of the sower “he who has ears, let him hear,” seeming to reference Isaiah’s prophecy about hearing but not understanding.

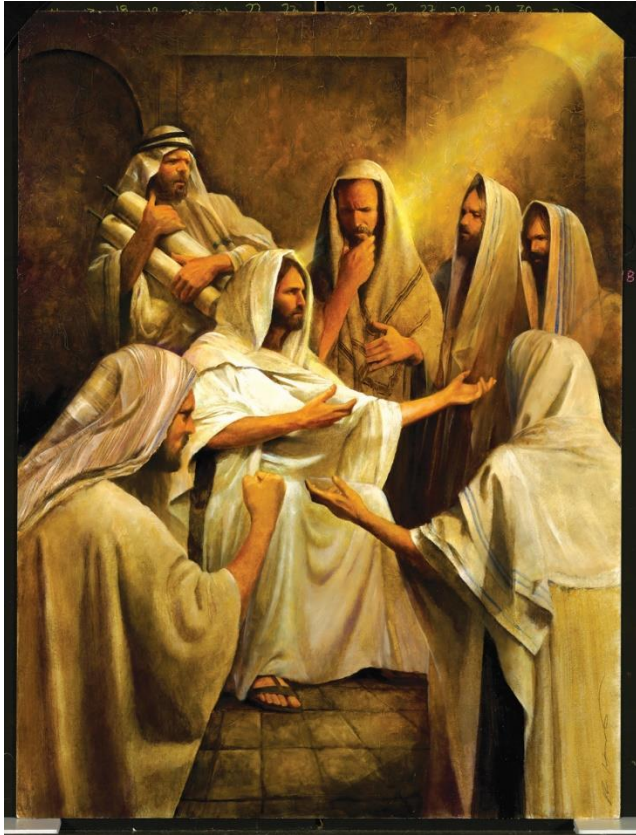
Matthew 13:44-52

Even More Parables

Jesus continues with more parables that seek to explain the Kingdom of Heaven, but a different aspect than He had brought up before. He ends this section with a final parable that seems to recognize that some are writing down what He is saying.



Question: What do these parables tell us about the Kingdom of Heaven? How is it different than the parables before?



Question: Why do you suppose the people treat Jesus skeptically in Nazareth?

Matthew 13:53-58

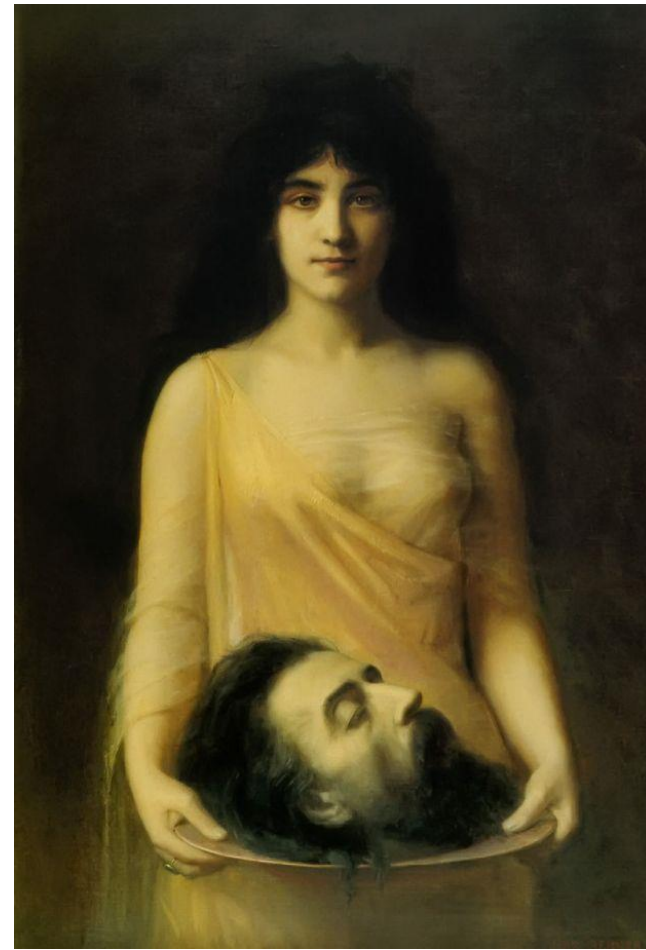
Jesus Rejected in Nazareth

Returning to narrative, Matthew records a moment when Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth. However, while at home, Jesus is treated with skepticism rather than welcome. This seems to connect thematically with the idea that Jesus continues to be rejected by His own people.

Matthew 14:1-12

Death of the John the Baptist

Matthew gives us an interesting interlude story with a rare flashback vignette. The subject is the death of John the Baptist and its explanation.



Question: Why do you suppose Matthew records this story in his Gospel? What does this have to do with Jesus?



Matthew 14:13-21

The Feeding of the 5000

Matthew records his accounting of the only miracle that is mentioned in all four Gospel accounts.

Question: Why do you think this miracle was so important to be captured by all 4 Gospel writers?

Matthew 14:22-36

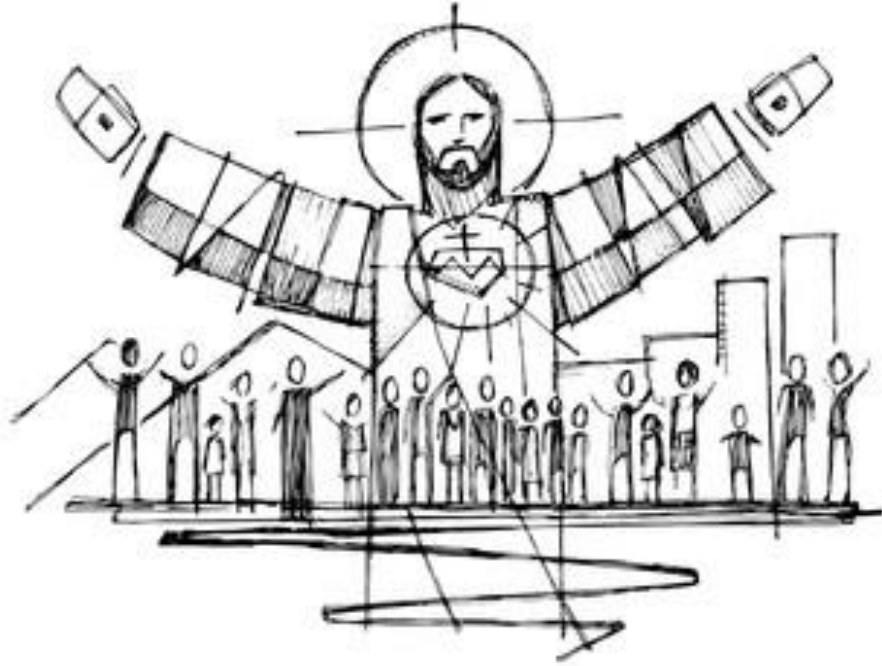
Jesus walks on water

After the feeding of the 5000, Matthew shows Jesus' disciples in a vulnerable moment still grappling with understanding who Jesus really is.

After this appearance, Jesus once again ventures in to Gentile territory in Genessaret.



Question: What questions do you think exist in the disciples' minds at this time?



Wrap Up

Congratulations, you're half way through Matthew's Gospel. What does it feel like to know that?

Next week – Matthew 15 and 16