



Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

13:24 – 14:14

We ended our last lesson with The Parable of the Sower. As chapter 13 continues, Yeshua tells more parables. As was explained last session, “Parables” were a common form of teaching in Judaism. In Hebrew, it is called *maschal*, meaning comparison. Yeshua had used other types of analogies in His teachings up to this point, but now He begins to use the parable, an illustration which was not complete in itself and required the presenter to further explain it to those who were hearing it. The question usually arises, “why did Yeshua use parables?” The most obvious answer is that He used parables to keep the truth from those who were not His disciples. For those who were His disciples, He immediately explained it. While this approach appears to be harsh, the truth was readily available to anyone who chose to follow Yeshua. They would then become a part of His circle and would hear the complete explanation. This kept out those who did not have a sincere interest or who might use the information with ulterior motives as some of the Scribes and Pharisees had done before.

24 He presented to them another parable, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while the men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 Now when the stalk sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared. 27 So the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Master, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from?’ 28 But he replied, ‘An enemy did this.’ Now the slaves say to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go out and gather them up?’ 29 But he says, ‘No, for while you are gathering up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time, I will tell the reapers, “First, gather up the weeds and tie them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn” Matthew 13:24-30 TLV). Yeshua didn’t immediately explain this parable, but presented two more. 31 He presented to them another parable, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 It’s the smallest of all seeds; yet when it’s full grown, it’s greater than the other herbs. It becomes like a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” 33 He told them another parable, “The kingdom of heaven is like hametz, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened” (Matthew 13:31-33 TLV).

Matthew tells us that Yeshua did all of His teaching to His disciples in parables. This was done in order to fulfill what was said by “the prophet.” *34 All these things Yeshua spoke to the crowds in parables. And apart from a parable, He wasn’t speaking to them, 35 in order to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, saying, “I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:34-35 TLV). The prophet in this case was not one you’ve ever heard of as a prophet. He was Asaph, a Levite in King David’s court. Yeshua called him a prophet and 2Chronicles verifies that he was: 30 Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to Adonai with the words of David and of Asaph the seer (2Chronicles 29:30 TLV). The prophecy which*

Asaph spoke about Yeshua in Psalm 78: 2 *“I will open my mouth with a parable. I will utter perplexing sayings from of old, 3 which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, telling to the next generation the praises of Adonai and His strength and the wonders He has done”* (Psalm 78:2-4 TLV).

Earlier Yeshua had left *Shimon Kefa’s* house in *Kafer Nachum*, Capernaum, and walked the few hundred yards to the shore of Lake *Kinneret* where He had taught these parables. Now, He left the lake, sent the crowds away and returned to the house. Once inside, His disciples asked for an explanation of the Parable of the Weeds of the Field. 37 *He answered, “The one sowing the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world. And the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the weeds are the sons of the evil one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Therefore just as the weeds are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks and those who practice lawlessness. 42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace; in that place will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear”* (Matthew 13:37-43 TLV)!

Yeshua began His explanation of this parable, sometimes called The Parable of the Wheat and Tares, by using *remez*. You know it as the Hebrew method of teaching which hints back at a Scripture to add weight or make a point in the story which is being told. In this case, Yeshua refers to Himself as “the Son of Man,” a well-known Messianic figure in the early 1st century. We find The Son of Man in Daniel 7: 13 *“I was watching in the night visions. Behold, One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence. 14 Dominion, glory and sovereignty were given to Him that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:13-14 TLV). Knowing *Torah* and the Prophets, Yeshua’s disciples immediately got the point. The picture of ADONAI seated on His throne and being approached by one who appeared to be a human being would immediately come to their minds along with Daniel’s words that all authority was given to Him.

Yeshua began by establishing His authority as The Son of Man. Then He explained the parable. The good plants which grew from the seed which Yeshua sowed are the sons of the kingdom, you and me. The weeds are the sons and daughters of *HaSatan*, those who follow his counsel and carry out his agenda. As weeds scattered among us, the good plants, the wheat, they are not immediately pulled up and burned. This could be for several possible reasons. One, even though they are evil, they still serve ADONAI’s purposes, and two, that pulling them out now may damage us in some way. They are also in a sense, the fields white for harvest because some still can and will repent and turn to ADONAI. But, they are also there because you can’t pull up a weed growing next to a good plant without damaging the good plant. If they were removed from our lives, we would not be able to function fully as the disciples which we have been called to be. There is still opportunity for some of them to be saved.

Matthew doesn’t tell us if Yeshua explained the Parable of the Mustard Seed or the Parable of the *Hametz*, but we must assume that He did. We can easily understand them ourselves. The very small mustard seed represents the Kingdom of Heaven which grows into the largest of herbs, similar in size to a small tree. The Kingdom of Heaven, like this seed

once it germinates, is growing, continually and enlarging. The *hametz*, the yeast, also starts small. In this parable a very small amount of *hametz* leavened three measures of flour, a great amount of flour. The Kingdom of Heaven, like the yeast, once activated, will continue to grow.

Yeshua told them three more parables. Here are the first two. 44 *“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid. And because of his joy, he goes out and sells all that he has and buys that field.* 45 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. 46 Upon finding a pearl of great value, he went out and sold all that he had and bought it”* (Matthew 13:44-45 TLV). These two parables are very much alike and show the very great value of being a part of the Kingdom of Heaven. Would that each of us would only realize the great treasure which we have in our relationship with Yeshua and the Father and treat it fully with the importance which it deserves in our lives. The treasure and the pearl cost all that the men had. The cost is the same for us, our lives, all that we have. We are bought for a price!

47 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea, gathering things of every kind. 48 When it was filled, they pulled it ashore; and they sat down and gathered up the good into containers, but threw the bad away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace; in that place will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 13:47-59 TLV). The Parable of the Dragnet is very similar to the Parable of the Weeds. In this case, it's not wheat and weeds, tares, it is *kosher* and non-*kosher* Sea of Galilee creatures. Included in this net could have been some *kosher* fish such as, damselfish, Tilapia and carp, which are found there today. We are the good fish. But also in the net were the non-*kosher* ones, those which will be separated at the end of the age. They are blennies and catfish, fish which have fins, but lack scales as *Torah* directs. These are the evil ones which will be separated at the end of the age. Yeshua used ordinary things to construct His parables, things familiar to the Galileans such as fishing and farming.

After this, Yeshua said: 51 *“Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes.”* 52 *Then He said to them, “Therefore every Torah scholar disciplined for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure both new things and old”* (Matthew 13:51-52 TLV). If we as Yeshua's present disciples have understood as His disciples said they did in that day, we also are *Torah* scholars who have been disciplined for The Kingdom of Heaven. As the masters of our lives, we are to study to show ourselves approved: 15 *“Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth”* (2Timothy 2:15 TLV). Treasures new and old could possibly be Yeshua's way of referring to *Torah* and the *Tanakh* as the old and His words and the coming writings of His disciples as the new. That's not far-fetched. As homeowners, we have some treasures of both kinds in our possession. We also have in our possession the complete Bible of today. Understanding it this way, Yeshua's words point out our need for a balanced approach to the study of Scripture today. We cannot just focus on the “New Testament” as some do and expect to get a complete and balanced picture of ADONAI's plan for our lives. We must be Berean and search all of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

53 *Now when Yeshua had finished these parables, He left that place. 54 Coming into His hometown, He began to teach them in their synagogue so that they were amazed. “Where did this fellow get this wisdom and these mighty works?” they said. 55 “Isn't this the*

carpenter's son? Isn't His mother called Miriam, and His brothers Jacob and Joseph and Simon and Judah? 56 And His sisters, aren't they all with us? So where does He get all these things?" 57 And they took offense at Him. But Yeshua said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house." 58 And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:53-58 TLV).

Yeshua had had an earlier encounter in His hometown *synagogue*. It is reported in Luke 4. Sometime after His temptation by *HaSatan* in the wilderness, He went to Nazareth. On that *Shabbat*, He was given the honor of reading the *haftarah* portion from Isaiah, but they did not receive His *d'rash*, the explanation of the Scripture which He gave and sought to kill Him by pushing Him off a cliff. Here in Matthew 13, He goes once again to His hometown *synagogue*. The men there were initially amazed at what He was teaching, what He knew, since they knew that He was *Yosef's* and *Miryam's* son, a hometown boy. But, soon they took offense at Yeshua and essentially called Him a liar. They did not believe the things that He was telling them. At least, this time they did not try to kill Him. But, because they did not believe Him, they missed out on a blessing. They could have had many miracles and healings. Certainly, there were some there who needed them. It was their unbelief which caused them to miss out. Verse 58 tells us why: *And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief*. A few may have been healed but how many more could have been.

We now go to chapter 14. *1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Yeshua. 2 He said to his servants, "This is John the Immerser—he has risen from the dead! Because of this, these powers are at work in Him." 3 For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, 4 because John had been telling him, "It is not permitted for you to have her." 5 Although Herod wanted to kill John, he feared the crowd because they considered John a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday celebration came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, 7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. 8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Immerser, here on a platter!" 9 The king became sorrowful; but because of his oaths and those reclining with him, he commanded it to be given. 10 And he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12 John's disciples came forth and took the body and buried it. Then they went and reported to Yeshua.* (Matthew 14:1-12 TLV). We reported on this in detail when we studied Matthew chapter 11. At that time *Yochanan* was alive in prison and he sent his disciples to ask Yeshua some questions. You can find this information in Matthew Lesson 14 on August 11th to either watch on YouTube or read it on our website, www.beitshalom.us. It is also printed at the end of this message on the written copy on our website.

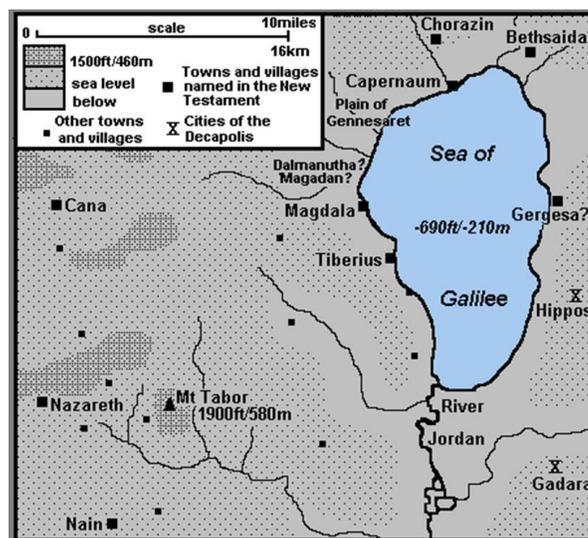
13 Now when Yeshua heard this, He went away from there privately by boat to an isolated place. But when the crowds heard, they followed Him on foot from the towns. 14 As Yeshua came ashore, He saw a large crowd and felt compassion for them and healed their sick (Matthew 14:13-14 TLV). At the end of chapter 13, Yeshua was in Nazareth. Apparently, He left there and went to the lake where he boarded a boat and privately went to an isolated place, that is, without His disciples. However, it is not clear that this is the case and His disciples could have been with Him. But there were crowds that either gathered in Nazereth or began to follow Him after He left there. These people were so anxious to be with Him that they followed him to the lakeshore and then, seeing the boat, they followed along the shore. At a certain place, He decided to come ashore and minister to them.

15 When it became evening, the disciples came to Him, saying, “This place is isolated, and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves” (Matthew 14:15 TLV). As just mentioned, we are not told that the disciples were with Yeshua in the boat. They may have followed on shore with the other people. The isolated place that Yeshua came ashore and the crowds came to Him has for hundreds of years been associated with the location called Tabgha. It is 3 kilometers south of Capernaum on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

A church was first built there in 350 CE and was enlarged around the year 480. In 614, it was burned by the Persians. After it was destroyed, the exact site was lost for 1,300 years. In 1888 the site was acquired by the German Catholic Church, but nothing was done with the site until the 1930s. Excavations at that time discovered the original mosaic floor from around 480 CE and a temporary structure was built above it. The present modern church was built in 1958 on the pattern of the 5th century church foundation which had been discovered.

But, now there is another contender for the site. Recent archeological evidence from an excavation across the lake on the east side of the Sea of Galilee leads some to believe that this was the place where Yeshua came ashore. This makes some sense because of Nazareth’s location with regard to the lake. This newly discovered place, called Hippos, is on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The original city there dates back to at least the beginning of the 1st century and possibly as early as the third century BCE. The remains of a church have been found there which apparently also suffered the same fate in 614 as did the one at Tabgha. It was burned by the Persians. There are several floor mosaics from the remains of this church which appear to refer to the Yeshua’s feeding of the 5000. In the nave of the church, the mosaic depicts two sets of three fish, but in the apse, there are merely two small fish, arranged to face each other. Along with the fish, there are 12 baskets containing exactly five loaves of bread, the exact number loaves which fed the 5000 and the exact number of baskets used to gather the remains.

If this is the correct location, the crowds would have had to have followed Yeshua quite a distance on foot before He got into a boat.



This map will help us to understand the possibilities. Since Yeshua was at Nazareth in the lower left of the map when He began this journey, He would have had to first travel to the lake. Looking at the scale of miles, just that part of the trip was 15 miles or more. There are several places where He could have boarded the boat. It could have been at either the small black dot near the southeastern corner of the lake or He could have gone further north to Tiberius. From either of these two locations, the boat could have travelled north to the Tabgha location which is about 2 miles south of Capernaum.

On the other hand, if Yeshua went to Hippos, He would have likely boarded the boat at the southeastern corner of the lake and then travelled across the lake to Hippos. The crowd would have had to follow on foot around the southern end of the lake and then north to Hippos. This was no small distance in either case and it appears that the people were very determined. Again, by comparing distances on the map scale of miles, it would seem that the crowd would have had to have walked at least 20 miles to get to either location. They were very motivated indeed!

It's very interesting to investigate the finer details of the Gospel accounts. The three different authors of the synoptic Gospels obviously were not trying to give an exact detailed account of what happened. One told one thing and another left it out. They appeared to choose what they thought was important. In Matthew's case regarding the events leading up to the feeding of the 5000, quite a bit was left out, possibly one day of time or more. Yeshua didn't leave Nazareth and then suddenly appear at the feeding site. Knowing more about what is especially interesting when you are in Israel. We have visited both of these sites, although our visit to Hippos was to a site believed to be Yeshua's example of a city built on a hill when He said: 14 *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden"* (Matthew 5:14 TLV). Regardless of which location is the real one, the account can stand on its own without the surrounding details. What's important is that Yeshua did come ashore and perform a miracle by feeding so many people with such a small amount of food.

We will begin with Yeshua's feeding of the 5000 at our next session. <23> *Shalom aleichem!*

From Matthew Lesson 14 August 11, 2020

2 Now when John heard in prison about the works of the Messiah, he sent word through his disciples 3 and said to Yeshua, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another" (Matthew 11:2-3). In Luke 3, verses 18-20, we are told that Herod had Yochanan put in prison, presumably because he had criticized him for marrying his brother Phillip's wife Herodias and eventually will have him put to death. We don't know a lot about John's death, but from a combination of sources, Scripture (Mark 6) and the historian Josephus, we are told that he was imprisoned at the Machaerus fortress which was located on the east side of the Dead Sea. It was about 9 miles inland from the Sea, having been built around 90 BCE. It was destroyed in 57 BCE and then rebuilt by this Herod's father, Herod the Great, in 30 CE as a military base to protect his eastern territories. In the center of the fortress was a palace and it was there on a visit by this Herod, Herod Antipas, and following his birthday celebration that John's death took place. Herodias wanted John put to death for criticizing her marriage to Herod, but she had no way to do it until an opportunity arose. When her daughter Salome's dancing pleased Herod and he vowed to give her whatever she wanted, prompted by her mother, she asked for John's head to be brought on a platter. Herod's

mixed emotions are recorded: *20 For Herod was in awe of John and kept him safe, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When he listened to John he was confused, but he still listened gladly* (Mark 6:20). Although, Herod probably did not want to kill John, he felt he could not back down before his guests and he had John beheaded and his head brought to the girl. John had been in prison about 10 months.