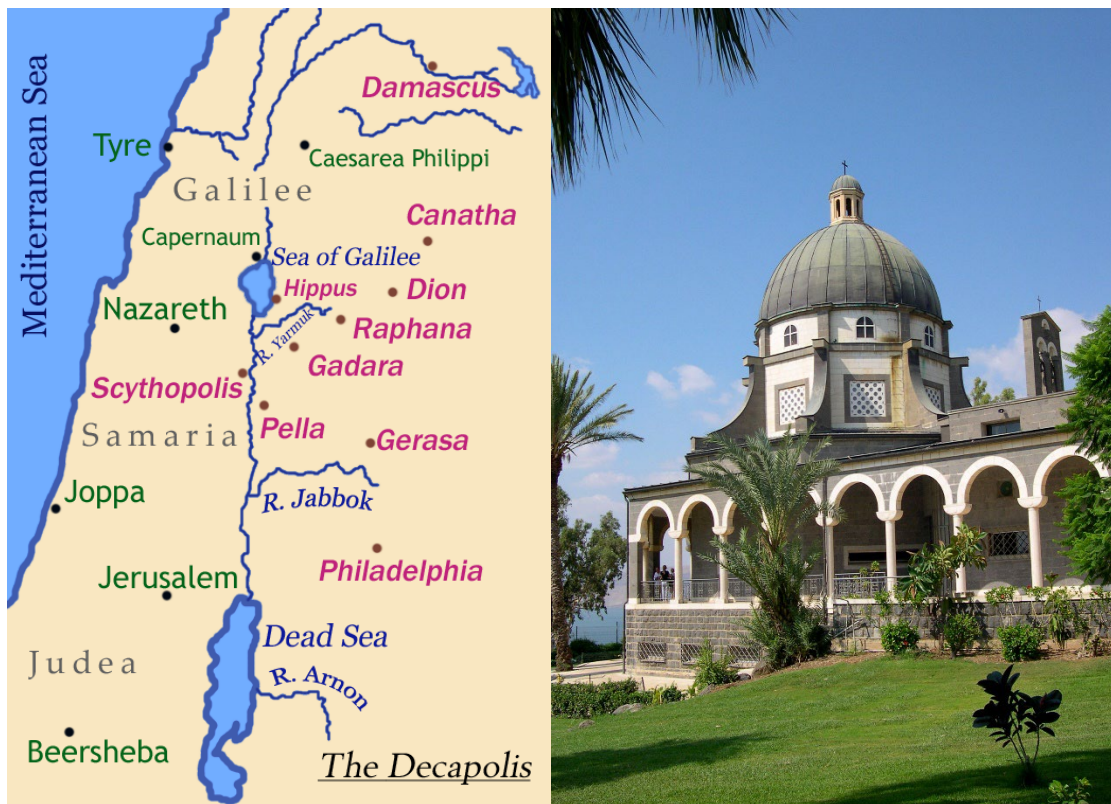


Sermon on the Mount Study Guide - Session 1 of 4

“The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best-known part of the teachings of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed. It is the nearest thing to a manifesto that he ever uttered, for it is his own description of what he wanted his followers to be and to do. The Sermon is found in Matthew’s Gospel toward the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry.” – *John Stott (1921-2011) was known worldwide as a preacher, evangelist, and author. In 2005, Stott was honored by Time magazine as one of the “100 Most Influential People in the World.”*

Context

Where was this sermon preached? The exact location is unknown. But Scripture says it was near the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum. There is currently a building, The Church of the Beatitudes, located in the area traditionally believed to be where the event took place.



Timeframe

According to the Gospel of Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount took place shortly after Jesus had called his First Disciples. In Matthew, only Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John had their callings listed prior to Jesus’ famous sermon. Matthew was called in Chapter 9, and the list of 12 are provided in chapter 10. Who attended this event? We don’t know.

What people made up the crowds?

The people of Northern Israel, in the Galilee area, were poor and blue-collar citizens. Their focus was survival from one week to the next. Some lived as nomads, others in small towns with family businesses related to trades of woodworking, metalworking, fishing, and farming. In John 1:46, Nathanael criticized Jesus' humble origins of the Galilean village of Nazareth when he said, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

The Beatitudes

The most popular portion of the Sermon on the Mount are the first 12 verses of Matthew chapter 5, known as the Beatitudes.

Latin *beatus*: happy, flourishing.

Greek *Makarios*: happy, flourishing, thriving

Jesus' statements of what the thriving, flourishing, kingdom life looks like.

Watch video. www.youtube.com/watch?v=82niqw4eAMQ

How do you define "blessed"?

Who do you normally consider to be blessed?

Read Matthew 5:1-12

How does this the video's explanation of "Blessed" change the way we read the beatitudes?

How is being 'poor in spirit' a reason to be happy, flourishing, or thriving?

What are some reasons for mourning? How are mourners blessed?

Notice the grammatical tense of the first and last beatitudes. How are they different from the rest? How does that change the meaning?

Salt and Light

Read Matthew 5:13-16

In what ways was salt used during Jesus' day?

How would the listeners have interpreted Jesus' statement, "You are the salt of the earth."?

If being a disciple is salt, then what is a disciple that has lost its saltiness?

Jesus also said, "You are the light of the world." Small lamps filled with oil were used to light the home. The higher the oil lamp sat, the more space was lit. For what purpose are we to let our light shine from a lampstand?

Why might we be tempted to hide our light?

The Fulfillment of the Law

Read Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law, rather than to abolish it. This emphasizes the Old Testament teachings. Why is knowledge of the Old Testament important in understanding Jesus?

In verse 20, Jesus said that only those surpassing the righteousness of the Sadducees and Pharisees will enter the kingdom of heaven. How does that work with the earlier statements about the poor in spirit, the grieving, and the meek?