



Judgment Coming

FAITH IN JESUS DETERMINES OUR ETERNAL DESTINY.

Scripture Passage: Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 Memory Verse: Matthew 13:40

We always think we can get away with it—that secret sin lying undiscovered. Perhaps it occurred in private or far enough away from home where we think no one knows us. The problem with “successful” sin is we think we can continue doing it. So, we keep on until judgment finally arrives in one form or another.

Nobody who sins thinks he or she will be caught. We think we’re pretty smart. Who’s to know? Well, God does. Scripture says we all have sinned and fallen short of His standard (Rom. 3:23). It declares the result of sin is death, which includes separation from God now and in eternity. The Bible is clear: Judgment is coming. Accountability is inevitable. The good news is that God’s free gift is eternal life through Jesus (Rom. 6:23). As we repent of sin and place our faith in Christ, we receive forgiveness from sin and eternal life with Christ (John 3:16-18; Acts 3:19).

As you study the parables of Jesus in this final session from Matthew 1-13, ask God to help you identify and confess any sins you might be holding in your heart. Also, consider how you can share God’s plan of salvation during this designated evangelism session.



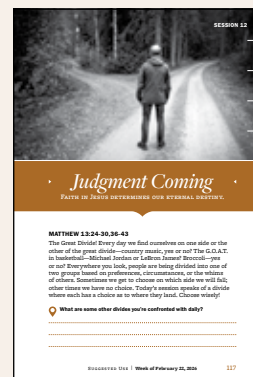
Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training

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The Great Divide! Every day we find ourselves on one side or the other of the great divide—country music, yes or no? The G.O.A.T. in basketball—Michael Jordan or LeBron James? Broccoli—yes or no? Everywhere you look, people are being divided into one of two groups based on preferences, circumstances, or the whims of others. Sometimes we get to choose on which side we will fall; other times we have no choice. Today’s session speaks of a divide where each has a choice as to where they land. Choose wisely! (PSG, p. 117)

What are some other divides you’re confronted with daily?



Understand the Context (Matthew 13:1-58)

Everyone loves a good story, but Jesus’s parables were more than interesting tales. Fulfilling Psalm 78:2, they challenged His listeners’ hearts and minds with truths about God’s kingdom. Crowds following Jesus didn’t just want to see His miracles. They also wanted to hear Him teach. In this scene, so many came that He had to speak from a boat while the people stood on the shore.

When His disciples asked about the parables, Jesus both explained them and shared why He used them. Some in the crowds did not understand because they were not interested in biblical truth. Others comprehended the teaching, but didn’t apply it to their lives. Jesus used a parable to illustrate this point.

In one familiar parable, Jesus compared people’s hearts to different soils. The seed and the farmer sowing are the same for each soil, but the results depended on the condition of the ground. Jesus explained how some people have hard hearts while others are shallow. Still more are hampered by worldliness. Some, though, are good soil, receiving the seed and yielding an increase.

Another parable compared the kingdom to a field that yielded both wheat and weeds. Early on, it was hard to tell them apart. But in time, the weeds became apparent, and the workers could cut them down and burn them up. The good wheat, representing believers, was gathered for the farmer’s use. This principle of separating the good from the bad also is seen in a

parable describing fish caught in a net. The bad fish were cast aside while the good fish were gathered in. Both parables point to a coming judgment in which believers are blessed while those who reject Christ experience eternal punishment.

Another pair of parables illustrate how God’s kingdom appears to be small and insignificant. The kingdom may seem as tiny as a mustard seed, but it grows strong and mighty. Similarly, the kingdom can act like a little yeast that makes a small lump of dough rise into a delicious loaf.

Two other parables also point to a single application. In one, a treasure found in a field motivates the excited discoverer to sell everything and buy that field for the prize. In the second story, a merchant finds a single pearl of great value. He too sells everything he owns so he can obtain that one priceless object. Both stories emphasize the invaluable nature of God’s kingdom.

Unfortunately, not everyone was thrilled about Jesus’s teaching. As He spoke in His home synagogue at Nazareth, residents wondered how this could be the carpenter’s son, the boy they had watched grow up. Jesus knew a prophet never lacks honor except among those who think they know Him best.

Read Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 in your Bible.
What spiritual truth do you think Jesus was illustrating with this parable? (PSG, p. 118)

ENGAGE



PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 1** (Map: Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee) and **Pack Item 7** (Poster: Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13).

READ:

Call on a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 117 of the PSG.

ASK:

What are some other divides you find yourself confronted with daily? (PSG, p. 117) Discuss responses. Point out that some divisions are harmless, like pulling for a sports team or choosing a flavor of ice cream. Note that the impact of other choices is much more serious.

REVIEW:

Share that today's session focuses on our most important choice: accepting or rejecting Jesus. Remind adults that Jesus had confronted religious leaders in Matthew 12, and they were ready to kill Him. Note that in Matthew 13, Jesus used parables to further highlight this division.

CONTEXT:

Direct attention to **Pack Item 7** (Poster: Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13) and briefly review each parable. To provide more context, share this content from page 118 of the PSG:

The Greek word translated "parable" means "to lay or place something alongside of." A parable lays something alongside something else for comparison or contrast. . . . Matthew 13 contains eight parables that relate truths concerning the kingdom of God. In several of them we find an explanation of the growing divide between those who follow Jesus and those who resist Him.

TRANSITION:

As we work through these parables, reflect on your walk with Jesus. If you've been putting off a relationship with Him, today is the perfect day to cross the divide. If you are standing with Christ, consider how you can become a more effective "kingdom citizen" and point others to Him.



Group Activity Option

Music

Play "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling" (Baptist Hymnal 2008, No. 414). Point out that "Softly and Tenderly" is well known and well-loved as a traditional hymn of invitation, encouraging individuals to accept Christ. Suggest that the hymn has been so effective because of its poignant, simple appeal encouraging listeners to accept Christ. Ask: **How do these lyrics underscore what's at stake in this decision?**

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

24 He presented another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. **25** But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left. **26** When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared. **27** 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?’ **28** ‘An enemy did this,’ he told them. ‘So, do you want us to go and pull them up?’ the servants asked him. **29** ‘No,’ he said. ‘When you pull up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them. **30** 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.’”

(vv. 24-25) As the Master Teacher, Jesus used stories known as parables to connect His listeners with spiritual truth. With an agricultural illustration, He shared **another parable** that His listeners could grasp. “Parable” translates a term that means “laid alongside.” These stories set an everyday occurrence (like farming) alongside a spiritual truth to illustrate the point.

Like other parables in Matthew 13, this one illustrates **the kingdom of heaven**. Matthew used the phrase “kingdom of heaven” while Mark and Luke preferred “kingdom of God.” Both terms apply to the reign of God now and in the future.

In this parable, a farmer **sowed good seed in his field**. “His field” indicates that this man owned the field. Meanwhile, “sowing” emphasizes his labor, and “good seed” points to his quality investment.

However, the landowner had an **enemy**. Using the pronoun **his** specifies how the devil is the personal enemy of Christ. Just like Satan, this enemy came when individuals were **sleeping** or had their guard down. He **sowed weeds among the wheat**. The strategy was to mix a counterfeit product among the good seed.

(v. 26) No one noticed what had happened until the **plants sprouted**. As expected, the good seed **produced grain**. But the **weeds also appeared**. The Greek wording describes a kind of wild grass that resembles wheat in the early stages of growth. Similarly, godly and ungodly people populate the same community. They may look similar on the outside; but, in time, each one manifests its true nature (1 John 3:10).

(vv. 27-28) When the weeds were discovered, the **servants** notified the landowner. Notice they acknowledged the landowner as their Master. The field belonged to him, and he had sown **good seed**. All should have proceeded well.

Naturally, they had a question: **Where did the weeds come from?** Since the landowner planted good seed in good soil, the source of weeds was obvious: **an enemy did this**. Like the weeds among the wheat, one of Satan’s strategies involves substituting imitations for the real thing. Fake doctrine. Fake pleasures. Fake believers.

The servants’ immediate response was to **pull them up**. As with their previous interactions with the landowner, they posed their ideas in the form of questions. Sometimes, well intentioned believers come up with solutions to problems without considering the Master’s will or His wisdom. We need to seek God’s direction before acting.

(vv. 29-30) The landowner wisely knew the dangers of acting prematurely, so he told them to wait. He didn’t want them to **uproot the wheat** accidentally while attempting to **pull up the weeds**.

Our Lord is more patient than we are. The landowner told the servants to wait **until the harvest**. Judgment would come in its time. When the proper season arrived, the ones doing the reaping could **gather the weeds** and **tie them in bundles to burn**. Believers will also be gathered; but unlike the **wheat** collected into a **barn**, they will dwell in the Master’s house forever (John 14:2).

We must examine our own faith as we wait for Jesus’s return. True believers need not fear judgment. The righteous Judge will grant them rewards just as He imposes the penalty of sin on those who do not believe (2 Tim. 4:8).



CONTEXT:

APPLICATION POINT: We must examine our own faith as we wait for Jesus's return.

Direct attention to **Pack Item 1** (Map: Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee). Point out that initially Jesus was sitting by the sea (Matt. 13:1). Point out Capernaum on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and suggest that this area could have been the setting for Matthew 13.

READ:

Guide the group to listen as you read Matthew 13:24-30 aloud. Encourage them to jot down key points and characters in the margin of the PSG.

DISCUSS:

Direct attention to **Pack Item 7** (Poster: Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13). Highlight "The Wheat and the Weeds." Encourage adults to summarize the plot of the parable. Discuss what each element might represent. Enlist a volunteer to read the "Did You Know?" feature (PSG, p. 120). Talk about why one group might have sown weeds in the fields of someone else. Highlight the distinction between believers (wheat) and unbelievers (weeds).

ASK:

Is it always possible to distinguish sincere believers from insincere believers? How? (PSG, p. 121)

RECAP:

To dig deeper into the parable, share this information from pages 119-120 of the PSG:

The Greek word for "weeds" likely refers to darnel, a type of toxic weed that closely resembles wheat in its early growth. It was impossible to tell the two plants apart until the grain formed. As the wheat and weeds grew in proximity to each other, their roots became intertwined. This made it impossible to root out the weeds without also uprooting the wheat. In the same way, godly and ungodly people populate the same community. While they may outwardly look similar, eventually each will manifest their true nature.

STATE:

While the landowner directed his servants to wait until the harvest to pull anything up, he had definite plans for each kind of plant in his field. Eventually, the weeds would be tied up and burned, while the genuine wheat would be protected and used for his benefit. Likewise, those who reject Christ can expect punishment from Him, while true believers will enter God's presence. The important thing is not how we look, but how we respond to God.

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

36 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.” **37** He replied, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; **38** 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, **39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.”

(v. 36) Spiritual curiosity is one characteristic of believers. Nobody among the **crowds** asked Jesus for an explanation of His parables. Only later did **his disciples** seek answers. The **house** is the same one mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Away from the crowd, Jesus’s disciples **approached him**. They took the initiative in learning more. They wanted a better understanding of what the stories meant, so they asked Jesus to **explain** the **parable of the weeds**. To their credit, they had been listening; and, to their credit, they came to Jesus with their questions.

(v. 37) As noted, parables compare something familiar with a spiritual truth. In this case, the **one who sows the good seed**, the landowner, was **the Son of Man**. Jesus often used this messianic title when referring to Himself. While on the earth, Jesus sowed kingdom seed wherever He went. When He returned to heaven, He appointed His disciples with the task of being His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Through the centuries, each generation of believers bears the commission to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20). At each point, Christ is the One producing the results.

(v. 38) The **field** signifies **the world**. “World” can have several meanings. Here, it applies to the world population. The **good seed** represented the **children of the kingdom**. Christ’s gospel was never intended for just one people group. His followers should be working throughout the world, encouraging people to respond to His message of salvation. This application differs from the parable of the sower, where the seed is God’s Word. Here, it represents the results of the Word in the lives of those who accept Christ.

In contrast, the **weeds** correspond to the **children of the evil one**. Many mistakenly believe that everyone is a child of God. While we all are God’s creation and carry His image (Gen. 1:26-27), only those who are born again through faith in

Jesus become God’s children. When Jesus confronted His adversaries who claimed Abraham as their father, He said they were actually children of the devil (John 8:39-44). This does not mean the devil was involved in procreation, but that they were the result of Satan’s work.

Some writers suggest the parable of the wheat and weeds addresses the presence of genuine and false believers in the church. It is true that some in the church profess Christ but have never truly surrendered to Him by faith. However, Jesus identified the field as the world at large, not the church. It is best to interpret the elements of the parable as Jesus described them.

(v. 39) The **enemy** was **the devil**. Whenever we encounter evil in the world, we need to identify the correct adversary. The enemy (Satan) **sowed** corrupt seed that resulted in weeds (children of the evil one). Each person has to make the choice between trusting Christ as Savior and continuing in sin. Putting off the response to Christ means risking eternity without Jesus, without God, and without hope (Eph. 2:12).

Jesus promised a **harvest** at the **end of the age**. This phrase refers to Christ’s return and the final judgment of the world. Looking forward to the end times does not minimize the immediate judgment that occurs at death, but it does remind us that judgment awaits everyone at some point. Jesus identified the **harvesters** as **angels** who participate in the gathering.

We need to recognize that not all who claim a relationship with Jesus are genuine believers. Churches need to exercise discernment in receiving and disciplining members. Proper counseling can help ensure individuals joining a church have truly repented of sin and received Christ by faith. If members exhibit habitual sin, proper church discipline can encourage true Christians to repent (see Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-12; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Thess. 3:14-15).



READ:

APPLICATION POINT: We need to recognize that not all who profess to believe in Jesus are genuine believers.

Lead the group to listen as you read Matthew 13:36-39 aloud and to identify the symbols in the parable.

DISCUSS:

Remind adults what each element in the parable symbolizes. Allow volunteers to share why it is important to understand these symbols. Affirm that the disciples recognized this as they heard Jesus teach, so they came to Him later looking for answers to their spiritual questions.

ASK:

Why would Satan want to sow “weeds” in the world?

EXPLAIN:

Instruct a volunteer to read John 10:10 aloud. Point out that while Satan is a defeated enemy, he is still powerful, and his main goal is to create chaos and disorder in the world. Remind adults that God created everything “good” in Genesis 1, and Satan has been working to corrupt that goodness ever since.

RECAP:

Direct attention to the “harvest” at the end of time. Use this content from page 122 of the PSG to highlight how the wheat and weeds will be separated:

At the end of the world, there will be a day of judgment. This is when God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous. Those who will aid the Son of Man in sorting out the children of the kingdom from the children of the evil one will be the angels.

ASK:

What is the church’s responsibility regarding the “weeds” sown by the devil? (PSG, p. 123)

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Gold

Prior to the session, locate an online video that teaches individuals how to pan for gold. During the session, show the video to the group. Highlight that “panners” must sift what they gather. Say: *Through this sifting process, one can get rid of extraneous material and locate the valuable gold.* Suggest that this process resembles the way unbelievers will one day be distinguished from true believers. Emphasize the truth that Jesus promised judgment and that the standard for distinguishing believers from unbelievers is what each did with God’s offer of salvation.

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

40 “Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. **41** 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. **42** They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s kingdom. Let anyone who has ears listen.”

(v. 40) Jesus concluded with a warning and a promise. **End of the age** refers to the final era before Christ’s judgment. It will be delightful for saints but terrifying for non-believers. Jesus compared the destiny of the lost to the **weeds** that were **gathered and burned in the fire**. Many people don’t like to think about the graphic images in this analogy, but ignoring the truth can lead to greater harm for unbelievers.

Key Doctrine

Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. (See Matthew 16:27; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.)

(v. 41) As **the Son of Man**, Jesus will one day **send out his angels** into the world. Angels have numerous functions in Scripture. They serve as messengers (Luke 1:26-38), warriors (2 Kings 19:35), protectors (Ps. 34:7), ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), and more. Here, they carry out Christ’s judgment. Notice they are “His” angels. He has the sovereign authority to send them out to accomplish His will.

At Christ’s command, angels will **gather from his kingdom** all unbelievers. This does not suggest that unbelievers are part of God’s kingdom in the same way as believers. Instead, Jesus emphasized His rule over all the world. The Greek wording for “gather” means to pluck, just like the weeds were plucked from among the wheat.

Those gathered are described in two ways: those who **cause sin** and those **guilty of lawlessness**. These terms do not identify distinct kinds of sinners but jointly describe the extent of their transgression. The Greek wording

expresses continual action and indicates that they lead others into evil. Their actions not only violate God’s commandments but demonstrate disregard and disdain for it.

(v. 42) The angels will **throw them into the blazing furnace**. Judgment involves a forceful act of casting unbelievers into this terrible place. The furnace portrays a lake of fire prepared originally for Satan and his followers (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10-15). This torment is a real place with real suffering, as seen in the anguish of **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

God does not delight in sending anyone to hell. That’s why He took the ultimate step of sending His only Son to die in our place (John 3:14-18). Those who accept Him as Savior will not perish, but they will have eternal life. Unfortunately, many will reject Him and spend eternity experiencing His wrath.

(v. 43) Once the unrighteous are removed, genuine Christ followers **will shine like the sun**. They won’t be righteous because they kept certain rules but because they entered **their Father’s kingdom**. The phrase “their Father” emphasizes the personal relationship they have with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Each day of believers’ lives can be spent in close fellowship with their heavenly Father. At death, each person who receives Jesus as Savior goes immediately into His presence (John 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:8). Ultimately, they will enjoy the Lord’s presence alongside believers who are alive at Christ’s return (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Jesus urged the disciples’ to pay attention to His words: **Let anyone who has ears listen**. They needed to take what He had said with utmost seriousness. Likewise, we can trust that Jesus will have the final word and that He will judge righteously. His death and resurrection provided atonement for sin.



READ:

APPLICATION POINT: We can trust that Jesus will have the final word and that He will judge righteously.

Enlist a volunteer to read Matthew 13:40-43 as adults consider additional images or phrases that capture their attention.

DISCUSS:

Allow adults to share what resonates with them. Highlight the word picture created by the burning weeds and discuss the implications for both believers and unbelievers. Highlight Matthew 13:40 as the session's memory verse and repeat it aloud together.

RECAP:

Point out the human response to separation from God for eternity. Share this content from page 124 of the PSG to emphasize the reality of hell and its terrors:

Scripture pictures hell as "the unquenchable fire" (Mark 9:43). It will also be an "eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:46). The anguish of this never-ending place of torment and punishment is seen in the reaction of those thrown into the blazing furnace: there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a vivid picture of anguish and despair. The Bible teaches that hell is a literal place, not figurative (10:28); the suffering of the lost in hell will be eternal not temporal (25:46).

ASK:

Does knowing there will be a final judgment with eternal consequences bring you comfort or concern?
(PSG, p. 125)

SHARE:

Briefly walk through the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover of the PSG. Point out that each session during this quarter has highlighted Jesus as Messiah and Savior. Challenge adults who have not accepted His offer of salvation to talk with you or another trusted leader about becoming a Christ follower and avoiding the coming judgment.

Group Activity Option

Bible Skill

Focus on Matthew 13:40-42. Read the verses aloud, emphasizing the actions of the angels. Then read the verses again, emphasizing the responses of those "guilty of lawlessness." ***How do these verses make you feel? How do they motivate you to share Christ's gospel?***

CHALLENGE

REVIEW:

Review these points from Apply the Text on page 126 of the *Personal Study Guide*:

- *We must examine our own faith as we wait for Jesus's return.*
- *We need to recognize that not all who profess to believe in Jesus are genuine believers.*
- *We can trust that Jesus will have the final word and that He will judge righteously.*

DISCUSS:

On the board, list the images Jesus used in the parable (*wheat, weeds, enemy, landowner, harvest, and so forth*). Allow adults to explain what each image symbolizes and why that image is important. Direct attention to the summary statement for this session: *Faith in Jesus determines our eternal destiny*. Encourage the group to discuss the statement and share what God might be saying to them through that truth.

REFLECT:

Direct attention to the second set of questions on page 126 of the PSG. Challenge adults to reflect silently on the fruit from their own lives and how they can point others toward Jesus more effectively.

PRAY:

Close the session in prayer, asking God to help each adult move deeper in their relationship with Him, including those who may be reaching out to Him for the first time. Pray that the group will have discernment as they act as wheat and seek to minister to weeds before Jesus comes back.

AFTER THE SESSION

Send a text or email to the group, encouraging them to read and reflect on the first set of questions on page 126 of the PSG. Also remind them that you are available to talk with anyone who wants to know more about becoming a follower of Jesus. Share that the group will be starting a series of studies on the second half of Matthew's Gospel (chaps. 14–28) during the next session.

LEADER BLOG



Discover helpful tips for using and getting the most from your Adult Explore the Bible resources at goExploreTheBible.com/blog.

EXPLORE  THE BIBLE.

Explaining Salvation to an Adult

G. Dwayne McCrary



One of the striking realities about the four Gospels is that they were written using simple Greek, the everyday words and grammar used in the markets, yet they are far from simple. For example, John talked about the Word existing before creation and then that same Word taking on flesh in the creation He formed.

Like other Gospel writers, John used simple words to explain a deep teaching. When we are in conversation with an adult about salvation, we need to follow this example of using simple terms to explain a profound truth.

Let's think about the critical items we need to explain using some simple terms to do so.

IDEA 1: WE ARE NOT RIGHT WITH GOD.

Everyone has disobeyed God in some way. The Holy Spirit makes a person aware of his or her sin and spiritual need (John 16:8-11). Each person must reach a point where they realize something has got to change, a turning away from sin and trusting ourselves, hating what God hates and the things that separate us from Him. (See Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 9:1-6; 2 Cor. 7:10.)

The change in direction (what the Bible calls "repentance") is driven by a conviction of personal sin that separates an individual from God and causes that person to be held accountable to face God's judgment (John 16:8; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Heb. 9:27; 1 John 1:9). This realization can be summed up in the word "Admit." We admit to God that we are a sinner and repent, turning away from our sin.

IDEA 2: GOD LOVES ME AND WILL FORGIVE ME IF I REPENT AND BELIEVE.

God has taken the initiative to demonstrate His love for each person by sending His Son,

“When Christ is Lord, as God transforms them, believers submit to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.”

Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for our sins. Three days later, God raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:7a; 1 Pet. 3:18). Jesus died, taking what we were due as our substitute. We can respond to that love with repentance through faith in Jesus (John 3:16; 10:10; Eph. 2:8-9).

The emphasis here is “Believe.” By faith (belief), we receive Jesus Christ as God’s Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin.

IDEA 3:
JESUS MAKES ME RIGHT WITH GOD.

This forgiveness is not automatic. Each person must express an act of faith in Jesus Christ—an action of the will and the mind to the facts of the work of Christ. Inwardly, they must believe, or trust, Him (Acts 20:21; Rom. 1:17; 1 John 1:9). Outwardly, confession of this faith in Christ as Savior and Lord is an external expression of an internal experience (Matt. 16:24; Rom. 10:9-10).

The moment a person expresses his or her faith, Jesus becomes that person’s Savior and that person is made right before God. The Bible calls this being “justified” (Rom. 4:1-3). God forgives all a person’s sins and removes them “as far as the east is from the west” (Ps. 103:12). Nothing else is needed. The person is now a believer, a disciple of Jesus Christ, baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

New believers are like newborn babies who need to grow up (1 Pet. 2:2-3). New believers are to be transformed into the image of Christ. When Christ is Lord, as God transforms them, believers submit to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

This third idea is best understood in terms of “Confess.” We confess our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.



These three ideas of admitting, believing, and confessing are included in the information found on the inside front cover of the *Adult Explore the Bible* resources. We may use a few different words for variety, but the core ideas are there.

This information is included on the inside front cover so you can easily share it with a person who has questions. Every time leaders open their Leader Guides, they have access to a clear, Bible-based plan for sharing the gospel with adults in their Bible studies. And every time we give a person a copy of the *Personal Study Guide* or *Daily Discipleship Guide*, we are giving them, in part, a gospel tract that uses simple terms to explain profound truth.

Historically, Bible study has been grounded in sharing the gospel with the lost. Leaders need to emphasize that aspect each week, and these resources provide tools to make leading adults toward the Savior possible.

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LEADER PACK IDEAS

Pack Item 1

Map: Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee
Sessions 1-12

Locate a map that highlights the region of Galilee in the first century, including key places where Jesus traveled and ministered in Matthew 1-13.

Pack Item 2

Poster: Outline of Matthew 1-13
Sessions 1-12

Refer to page 9 of the PSG to create a poster that outlines Matthew 1-13.

Pack Item 3

Poster: Jesus's Mission
Sessions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11

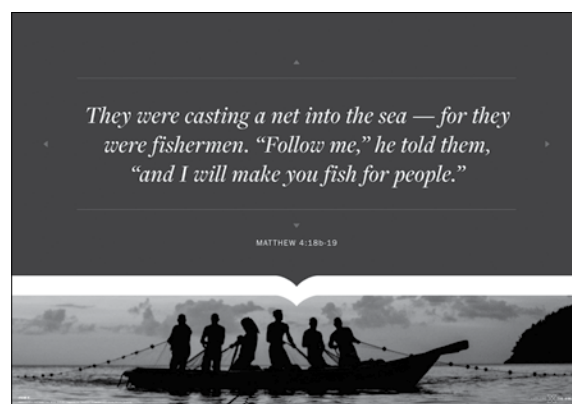
Create a poster that describes Jesus's work and mission on earth using "God the Son," Article II.B. from the *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000).

Pack Item 4

Poster: Key Verse: Matthew 4:18b-19
Session 2

Create a poster with the text of Matthew 4:18b-19:

They were casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."



Pack Item 5

Poster: Key Verse: Matthew 9:12
Session 8

Create a poster with the text of Matthew 9:12:

"It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick."

Examples from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*.
The Pack is available for purchase at goExploreTheBible.com.

Pack Item 6

Poster: Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus
Sessions 10-12

Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create a poster that highlights the prophecies Jesus fulfilled in the Gospel of Matthew. Include the event, the Old Testament prophetic reference, and the New Testament fulfillment reference.



Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus

One evidence that Jesus is the Messiah is the way He fulfilled messianic prophecies from the Old Testament. Below is a list of several prophecies Jesus fulfilled in Matthew 1-13. Jesus pointed to fulfilled prophecy to assure a struggling John the Baptist that He really is the Christ (Matt. 11:1-6).

EVENT IN JESUS'S LIFE	OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE	FULFILLMENT IN MATTHEW
Virgin birth	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18,22,23
Birth in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:4-6
Refugee years in Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14-15
Raised in Nazareth	Isaiah 11:1	Matthew 2:23
Preaching in Galilee	Isaiah 9:1,2	Matthew 4:12-16
Healing ministry	Isaiah 53:4	Matthew 8:16-17
Avoiding unwarranted attention	Isaiah 42:1-4	Matthew 12:16-21
Teaching in parables	Psalms 78:2	Matthew 13:34-35

ITEM 6
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EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Pack Item 7

Poster: Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13
Session 12

Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create a poster that highlights Jesus's parables in Matthew 13. Note the name of the parable, the references, and the truth Jesus was teaching for each story.

Pack Item 8

Handout: Matthew Time Line
Sessions 1-12

Locate a study Bible with a time line of the major people and events related to the Gospel of Matthew. Include both biblical and non-biblical historical references for context.

Pack Item 9

Handout: Praying Scripture in
Matthew's Gospel
Sessions 1-12

Create a handout to help adults pray through key Scriptures in the Gospel of Matthew. Provide the following prompts:

- Session/Verse
- General thoughts from the passage
- What does this passage teach you about God and His character?
- How is God leading you to respond to what He is showing you about Himself?
- Written prayer based on the passage

Pack Item 10

Handout: Messianic Prophecies

Session 3

Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create a poster that highlights the messianic prophecies fulfilled in Matthew's birth narrative (chaps. 1–2). Also include prophecies drawn from Luke 2–3.

Pack Item 11

Handout: The Sermon on the Mount
Sessions 4-6

Use a commentary, Bible handbook, or other source to create a handout that describes the divisions and key points of Jesus's sermon in Matthew 5-7.

Pack Item 12

Handout: Miracles in Matthew 8–9
Sessions 7–8

Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create a chart that highlights the miracles Jesus performed in Matthew 8–9. Note the miracle and its reference.

Pack Item 13

Handout: The Disciples in History

Session 9

Using a study Bible, Bible dictionary, or other resource, create a handout that provides biographical information for Jesus's twelve disciples, including their ministry after Jesus returned to heaven.

Pack Item 14

Handout: Legalism Worksheet
Session 11

Create a two-column chart for an application activity. Label one column “How People Try to Earn Salvation” and the other column “The Biblical Response to those Actions.” Challenge adults to list ways people rely on good works, along with biblical truths that refute those efforts.

LEGALISM WORKSHEET

The Bible is clear that individuals are saved by faith thanks to the grace God demonstrated when Jesus died on the cross. Yet, legalism—the idea that we can somehow earn our salvation—remains entrenched in the hearts and minds of many people in the space below, make a list of ways people try to earn their salvation. Then, identify Bible verses that contradict those ideas. Think about how you could use this information to talk to someone you know who is trying to be “good enough” to reach God on their own.

**HOW PEOPLE TRY TO “EARN”
THEIR SALVATION**

**THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE
TO THOSE ACTIONS, ATTITUDES**

ITEM 54

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EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Examples from *Explore the Bible Leader Pack*.
The Pack is available for purchase at **goExploreTheBible.com**.

COMING **NEXT QUARTER**



MATTHEW 14–28

Session 1: **Courage** (Matt. 14:22-33)

Session 2: **Real Devotion** (Matt. 15:1-11,16-20)

Session 3: **Following Jesus** (Matt. 16:13-26)

Session 4: **Glory** (Matt. 17:1-13)

Session 5: **Forgiveness** (Matt. 18:21-35)

Session 6: **Our Task** (Matt. 28:1-10,16-20)

Session 7: **Eternal Life** (Matt. 19:16-30)

Session 8: **Grace** (Matt. 20:1-16)

Session 9: **Authority** (Matt. 21:23-32)

Session 10: **Honor** (Matt. 22:15-22,34-40)

Session 11: **Alert** (Matt. 24:36-51)

Session 12: **Active Faith** (Matt. 25:31-46)

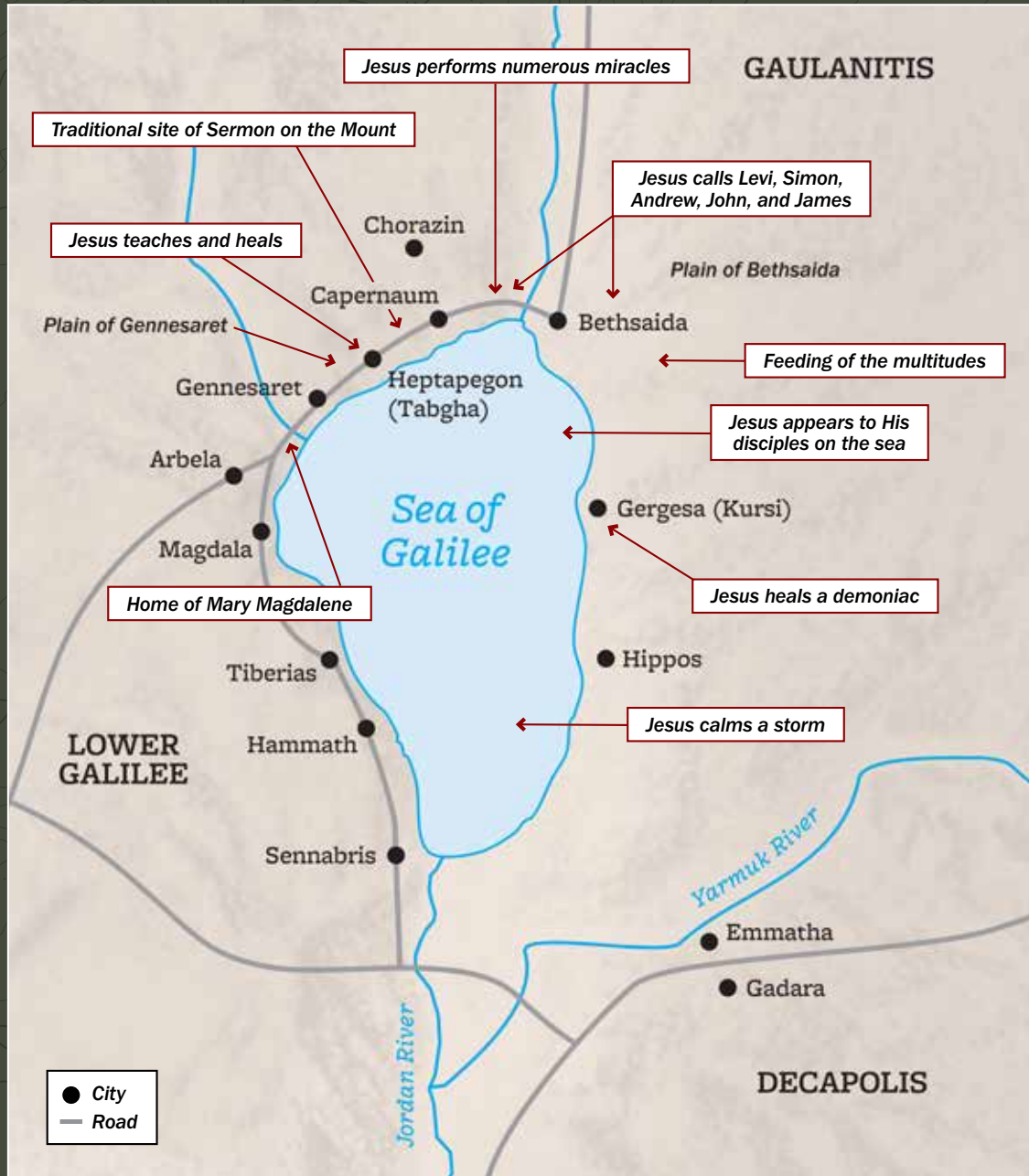
Session 13: **Our Atonement** (Matt. 26:17-30)

Session 14: **Our Savior** (Matt. 27:27-31,45-54)

Explore

“You will seek me and find me when you search for me
with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee



"Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee" is taken from the Holman Bible Atlas (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1998), p.221. Used with permission.

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.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

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