

The Horns of Hattin, i.e.

The Mount of the Beatitudes – The Most Misunderstood Message

from the Lips of the Lord

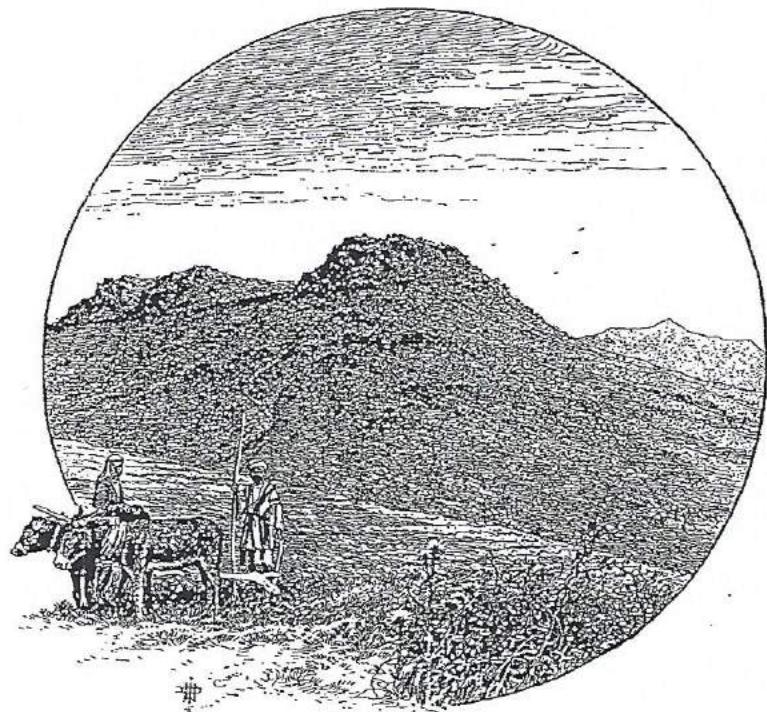
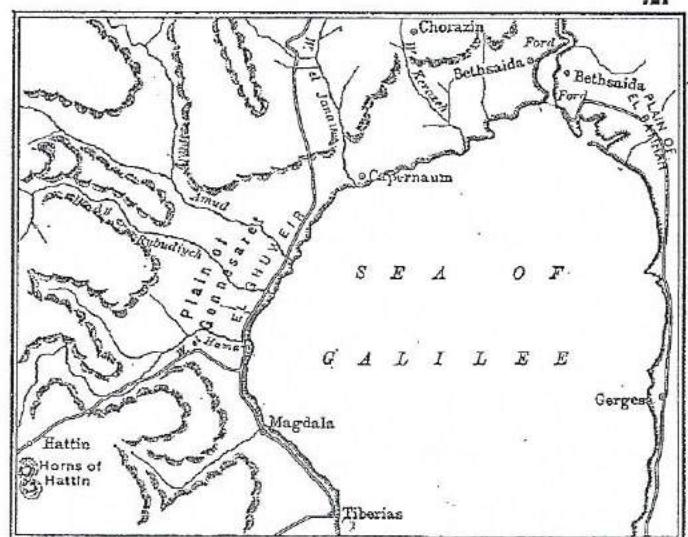


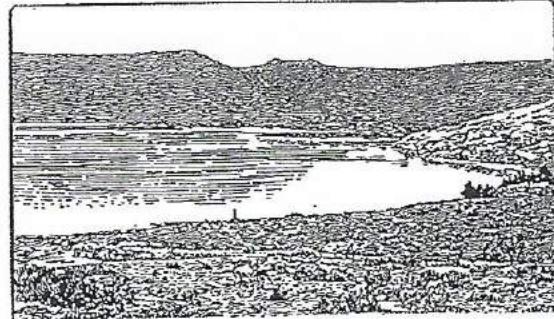
FIG. 115. Die Hörner von Hattin.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.



The Horns of Hattin



1A. The Importance of Galilee:

Galilee is the home of the Savior. He spent two years of His three years of public ministry in Galilee. His first major sermon was preached here, the topic for our discussion on the Horns of Hattin or the Mount of Beatitudes.

1b. The design of Galilee:

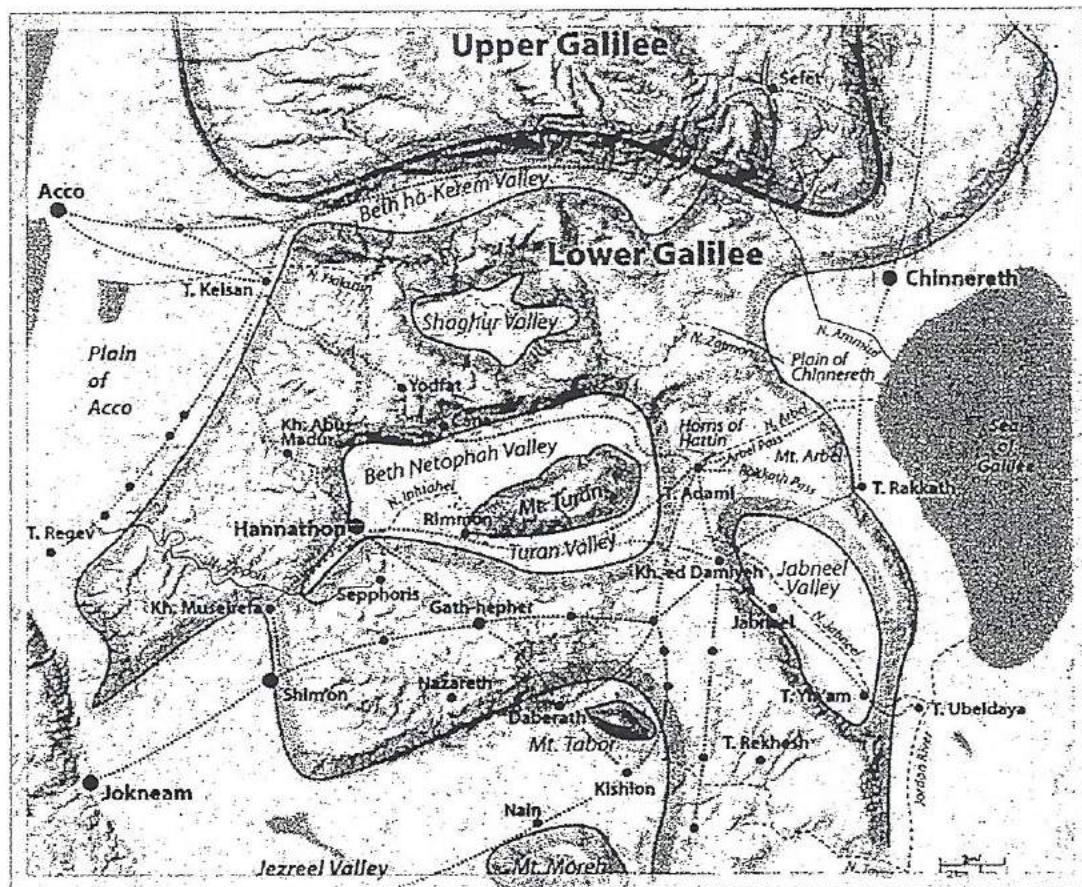
Galilee was a region in northern Palestine that was controlled at different times by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, and Roman Empires. Under the Romans it became a fixed administrative area (ca. 57 B.C.). Herod Antipas, for example, was tetrarch of Galilee after the death of his father, Herod the Great (4 B.C.; see Luke 3:1). Because the Israelites never succeeded in driving out the Canaanites who "dwelt among them" (Judg. 1:30-33), and since Galilee was surrounded by foreign nations whose populations mixed freely with the Jews, this region was called by Isaiah, "Galilee of the nations" (Isa. 9:1). The name "Galilee" comes from the Hebrew galil which means a circle. The word "nations" is from the Hebrew goim, which can also be translated "gentiles." Thus the phrase "Galilee of the nations" might also be translated "in the district (region) of the gentiles," reflecting the fact that Galilee often comprised a mixed population of Jews and gentiles.

2b. The division of Galilee:

Galilee is composed of several subregions, including Upper Galilee (most of which is in Lebanon today), Lower Galilee, and the Sea of Galilee...Upper and Lower Galilee are distinguished by differences in altitude, climate, and vegetation. The mountains of Lower Galilee are less than 2,000 feet high; whereas those of Upper Galilee attain almost twice that height. Upper Galilee is fragmented into isolated hills and deep valleys. Lower Galilee is more open: the valleys run between and parallel to the mountains, connecting the coast with the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee. These valley roads carried the commerce and military might of the ancient world, making Lower Galilee a focus of international concern.

3b. The description of the population of Galilee:

According to Josephus (1st century A.D.), "the cities [of Galilee] lie here very thick; and the very many villages ... are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand in habitants" (III Wars iii.2). The figures provided by Josephus see high (elsewhere he mentions some 200 towns and villages, making a total of more than 3,000,000 inhabitants in Galilee!), but his description of a highly populated region accords with what is known about Galilee in that period. What was true of Galilee, in general, applied more specifically to Lower Galilee because of its rich soils and abundant rainfall and because there was more level ground. Lower Galilee was one of the favored regions for settlement. Here, also, "Jesus went about all the



Der Berg der Seligpreisungen.

cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity" (Matt. 9:35).

2A. The Identification of the Location:

1b. The geographical features:

According to tradition, the Sermon on the Mount was preached on a mountain west of the Sea of Galilee, known as the Horns of Hattin, (in Arabic: *Kurin Hattin*, in Hebrew *Karnei Hittin*), an extinct volcano with twin peaks overlooking the plains of Hattin in the Lower Galilee.

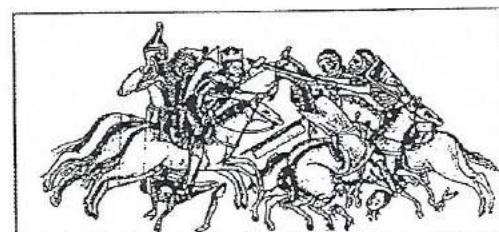
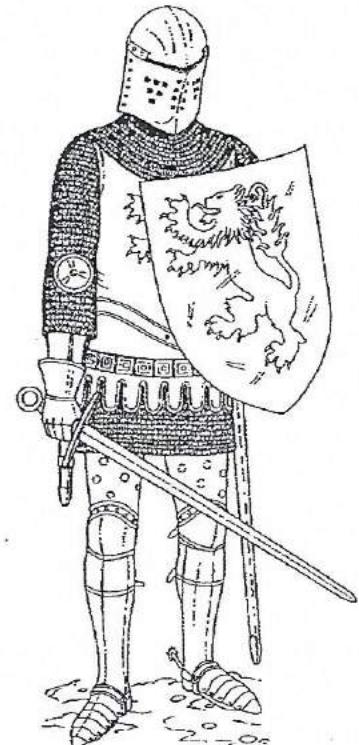
2b. The historical significance:

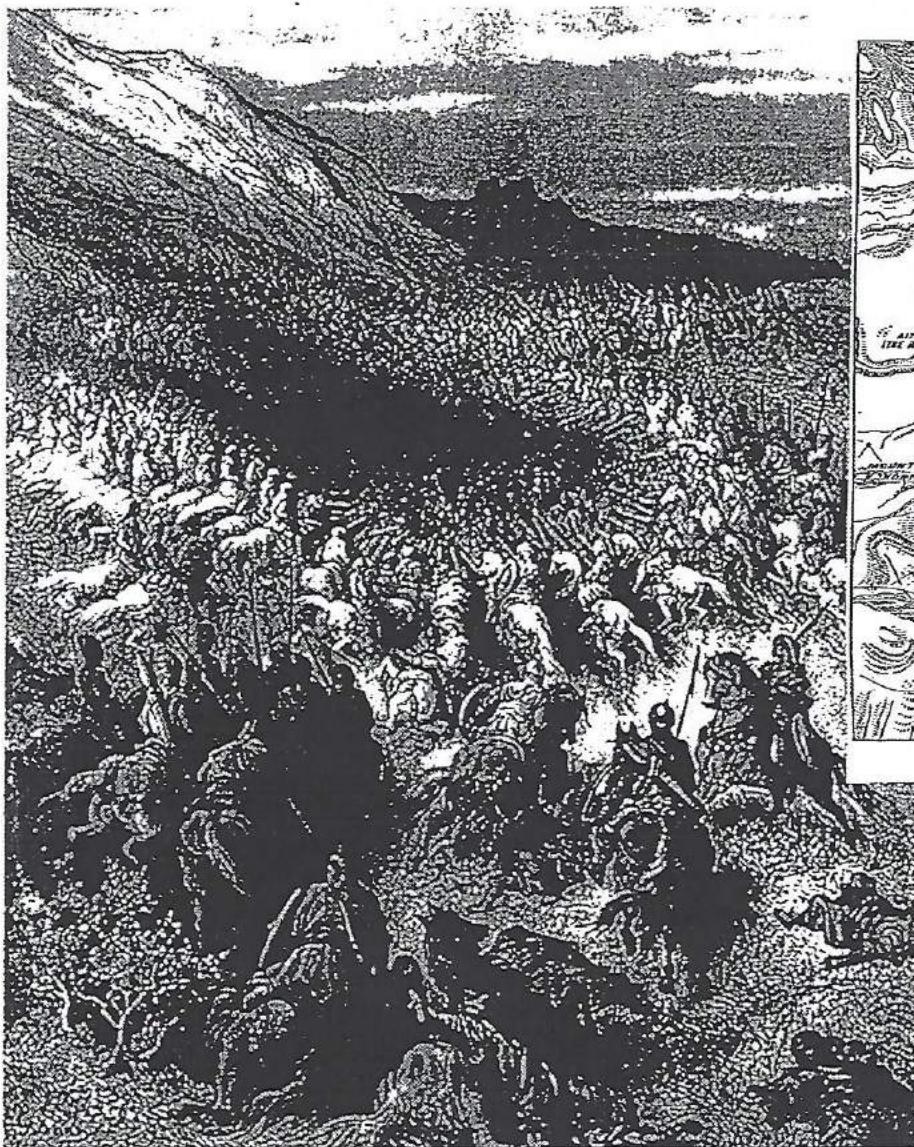
Karnei Hittin is believed to be the site of the Battle of Hattin, Saladin's victory over the Crusaders on July 4, 1187. The Battle of Hattin was fought in summer when the grass was tinder-dry. Saladin's troops set fire to the grass, cutting off the Crusaders' access to water in the Sea of Galilee. Saladin built a "victory dome," *Qubbat al-Nasr*, on the hill. Thietmar, a German pilgrim who visited the site in 1217, wrote that the "temple Saladin had erected to his gods after the victory is now desolate." In the early 17th century, ruins were found on the summit that appeared to be those of a church. Prior to 1948, and Arab village, Hittin, lay at the foot of the hill. Excavations were carried out on the hill in 1976 and 1981.

Many have identified the hill with the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount. Writing in 1864, Ferguson describes it as the "supposed" site, because although "its position corresponds with the particulars of the narrative," no one can declare with any certainty that He gave a sermon at that exact spot.

3b. The strategic location:

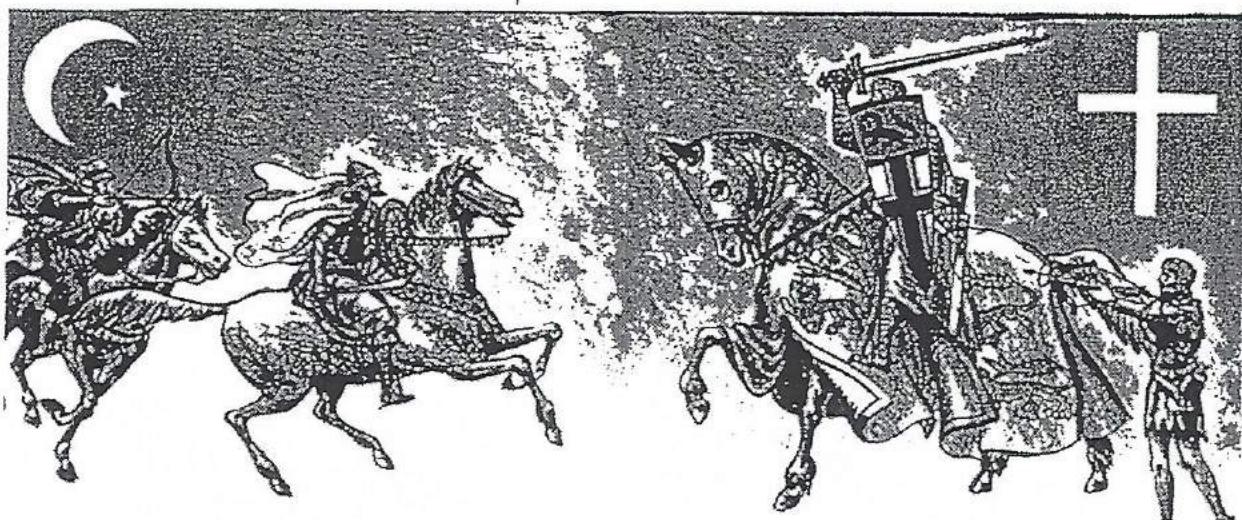
The narrow valley leading to the Plain of Gennesaret (northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee), was also called the "Valley of Robbers." Bandits used to plunder caravans as they traveled up and down this strategic pass. Herod the Great (38 B.C.), for example, gathered a force at the village of Arbel to purge Galilee of the "robbers that were in the caves" above the pass (I Wars xvi.2-5). This was also the way of the international highway called the Via Maris, and the road used by Jesus when he traveled from Nazareth to Capernaum.





Karte des Galiläischen Meeres.

Battle of Hattin



The above material was adapted from (http://www.messengers-of-messiah.org/Tour/Lower_Gal1.html, accessed 10/17/2012.) and (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horns_of_Hattin.html)

3A. The Mount of Beatitudes

1b. The name:

This name is given to the place where our Savior delivered the "Sermon on the Mount," beginning with the Beatitudes. The scene of this discourse is traditionally located on Karn Hattin (or Kurun Hattin), the *Horns* of Hattin, a mountain which receives its name from the little village at its northern base and from the two cones of horns which crown its summit. Karn Hattin is in Galilee, within easy distance of Nazareth, Cana, and Mt. Tabor to the southwest, of Tiberias and Lake Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee) to the east, and of Capharnaum to the northeast, in the center, therefore, of much of the ministry of Jesus. It lies 1,816 feet above the lake and 1,135 feet above the sea level.

2b. The geography:

This mountain, rising above the hills that skirt the lake, is the only height to the west that can be seen from its shores. It consists of a low ridge about one-quarter of a mile long, extending east and west, and rising at each extremity into a cone or horn. The eastern horn, which is the taller, is only sixty feet above the ridge. Between the horns lies an uneven platform which could easily accommodate the crowd that followed Jesus; but it is believed that the spot on which the discourse was given is lower down, on a level place on the southern side of the mountain, corresponding with St. Luke's description (*topou pedinou*) vi, 17, which may mean a level place, as well as a "plain."

3b. The view:

From the eastern slope of the hill there is a beautiful view, to the east, of the lake with the Jolan (Gaulanitis) mountains beyond, to the south the plateau of Ard el-Hamm, and Mt. Tabor, and to the north the snowy height of Mt. Hermon. The tradition that there was a village on the mountain top, if true (the only proof being the remains of a wall which served as defense to a camp), might lend point to the reference in the sermon to the city which was seated on a hill and could not be hid (Matt., v, 14); and the beautiful flowers that abound there might include the unidentified "lilies of the field" (vi, 28). Bishop Le Camus (*Notre Voyage aux Pays Bibliques*, II, pp. 220-222) thought he never saw elsewhere and never imagined so lovely a variety and harmony in the beauty of flowers; other travellers are scarcely so enthusiastic, but all agree the spot has a charm of its own.

4b. The tradition:

It is interesting to note that, like the Old Testament law, this law of Christ for His people was given on a mountain.

The tradition regarding the scene of the Sermon on the Mount, though usually received with a certain degree of favor by Scriptural scholars, apparently does

not go back beyond the crusaders. St. Jerome, the best informed man of his day on points of this nature, knew of no such tradition and merely conjectured that the scene was on Mt. Tabor or some other high mountain of Galilee (Comm. In Ev. S. Matt. In Cap. V). The Gospels, in fact, afford but little help in determining the site. Matt., v, 1 locates the sermon on The mountain (*to oros*), and Luke, vi, 12, uses the same expression for the spot from which our Lord descended before He preached on the "level place", vi, 17. The expression most naturally "suggests that the sermon had long been traditionally connected with a mountain and seems to mean The mountain on which the sermon was delivered." Some scholars even see in the definite article the indication of a particular mountain which the Evangelists suppose known to the reader; but popular curiosity concerning the scene of particular Gospel events is a growth of later date.

5b. The mountain:

If we seek to determine the particular mountain to which the Evangelists allude, we cannot advance with anything like certainty beyond the ancient opinion of St. Jerome (Comm. in Ev. Matt.) that the events before and after the discourse show that it was given on some mountain of Galilee. It is not unlikely that the locality was not far distant from Capharnaum, into which our Lord entered after finishing His discourse (Matt., viii, 5; Luke, vii, 1); but the Evangelists do not say how soon after the discourse He entered Capharnaum. We know from their literary methods that it may have been a day, a week, or even more, for they had little interest in the chronological sequence of events, and the attempt to press details of this sort only results in interminable contradictions.

6b. The probability:

In favor of Karn Hattin, it is said, is the fact that it is accessible from all sides, which is thought to be demanded by the narratives of Matthew (iv, 25, v, 1) and Luke (vi, 17). But this argument, although it is accepted by Dean Stanley (Sinai and Palestine, London, 1883, p. 369) who is usually quite rigorous in requiring proof, has little force, since the multitude did not flock to the mountain from all sides, but, according to Matthew, at least, first gathered together and followed Jesus up the mountainside. (Cf. iv, 25, v, 1, with vii, 28, where the multitude, not merely the disciples, are found on the spot where the sermon was delivered). . . . It is near the scenes of our Lord's greatest activity and fulfills all the requirements of the narrative.

(The information was gleaned from the Original Catholic Encyclopedia online, http://oce.catholic.com/index.php?title=Mt._of_Beatitudes.html. It is interesting to note that this Catholic source places the Mt. of Beatitudes some distance away from the place now frequented by most visitors. A beautiful little chapel crowns a hill above Capernaum from which one has a magnificent view of the entire Sea of Galilee which, like a beautiful jewel, lies to one's feet. The edifice was built by the Italians in 1937. This is an alternative location. However, from what Josephus said, the Sea of Galilee was surrounded by nine cities at the time of Christ, and one would suppose that the popular Mt. of Beatitudes in the vicinity of Capernaum was part of a city lining the shores of Galilee [Note the next page for pictures of the Mt. of Beatitudes above Capernaum]).

4A. The Holy Mountain



9. Der Predigtberg.

Gegen 130 Meter steigt der Berg, Karum Hattin genannt, schroff über die Ebene auf; am östlichen und westlichen Ende hat er Spalten von etwa 20 Meter Höhe, die aus der Ferne den Anblick von Hörnern gewähren. Wie der Berg etwa in der Mitte steht zwischen dem Tabor und der Höhe von Safed, so eröffnet sich auf ihm eine herrliche Aussicht auf den Berg der Verklärung, auf den steilen Bergabfall bei Magdalla und die Ebene Genezareth mit Kapernaum, auf den nördlichen Teil des Sees mit seinem leuchtenden Wasserspiegel, und über Galiläas Fluren bis zum Hermon hinauf. An diese Stätte verlegt die Überlieferung die Bergpredigt des Herrn, bei der das Volk, auf der amphitheatralisch sich senkenden Ebene gelagert, der holdseligen Rede lauschte; so steht der Berg da wie der Thron eines Mächtigen, dessen Fußschemel die Erde ist. Nahe dieser Stätte wurde die Schlacht verloren, in der die Herrschaft der Kreuzfahrer im Heiligen Lande gebrochen ward. Das herrlichste Heer, das je von ihnen im Lande aufgestellt war, 2000 Ritter, 8000 Fußsoldaten, eine große Schar Leichtbewaffneter, kämpfte unter dem schwachen König Béit von Jerusalem in dem schattenlosen Tale am Fuße des Berges 1187 gegen den tapferen Sultan Saladin. Nicht die Glut der Sommersonne, nicht die Qual des Durstes und Hungers, nicht die Übermacht des Feindes brach die Macht des christlichen Königreichs; es war die Sucht nach Beute, es war die Uneinigkeit der christlichen Fürsten, welche die Niederlage herbeiführte. Der König zog sich endlich auf den

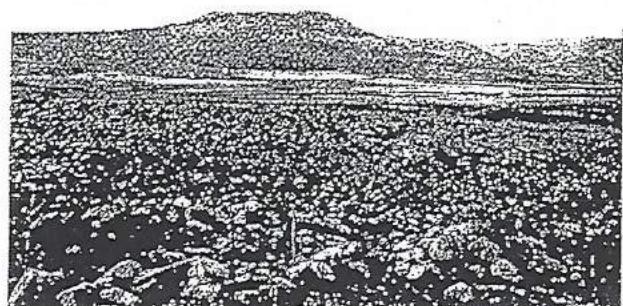
occasioned by the fact that it is assumed that here the Sermon on the Mount was preached. **The place seems to have been created for just this occasion.** The mountain was a pulpit, the sanctuary the beautiful nature surrounding the mountain, with its gorgeous scenery of which the Savior was always keenly aware.

(G. W. Ulrich-Kerwer, *Heilige Berge*, Konstanz: Buch-und Kunstverlag von Carl Hirsch A.G., 1913, 157-158. Translation by this writer.)

Pastor Ulrich-Kerwer, in his classic volume, *Heilige Berge (Holy Mountains)*, written in 1913, gives place to his enthusiasm of that beautiful mountain in Galilee.

The mountain, called Karun Hattin, rises some 130 meters steeply above the plain. At its eastern and western end it has a point of about 20 meters high which from a distance give the appearance of horns. Since the mountain is positioned at midpoint between Mt. Tabor and the elevation of Safed, it affords from its height a glorious view of the Mt. of Transfiguration, the steep decline by Magdala and the plain of Gennesareth, with Capernaum, to the northern part of the Lake with its shining waters, across the fields of Galilee up to Mt. Hermon. Tradition assigns to this location the Sermon on the Mount by the Lord, with the people seated in the amphitheatre-like declining plain, listening to His gracious words. Thus the mountain stands here like the throne of a mighty king whose footstool is the earth...

Our interest in the mountain is occasioned by the fact that it is assumed that here the Sermon on the Mount was preached. **The place seems to have been created for just this occasion.** The mountain was a pulpit, the sanctuary the beautiful nature surrounding the mountain, with its gorgeous scenery of which the Savior was always keenly aware.

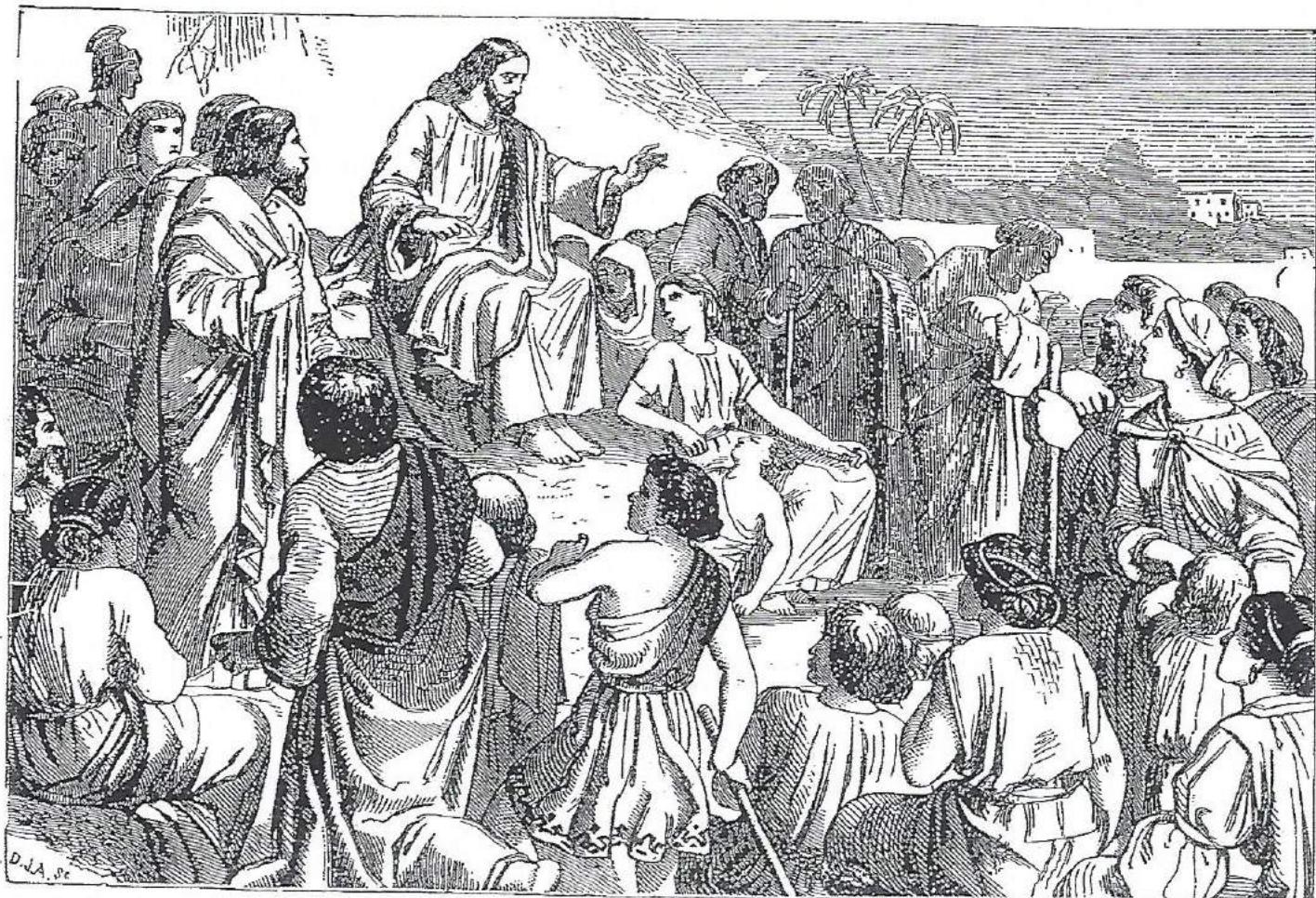


(By permission of Palestine Exploration Fund.)

Plain and Horns of Hattin, from ruins of Irbid.

The Major Discourses of the Divine Teacher

THE THREE MAJOR DISCOURSES OF CHRIST			
TITLE	TOPIC	THRUST	TIME
Sermon on the Mount – Mt 5-7	Kingdom	Israel	1,000 years
Olivet Discourse – Mt. 24-25	Tribulation	World	7+ years
Upper Room Discourse – John 14-16.	Church Age	Church	c. 2,000 years



JESUS TEACHING.

Die Bergpredigt Jesu.

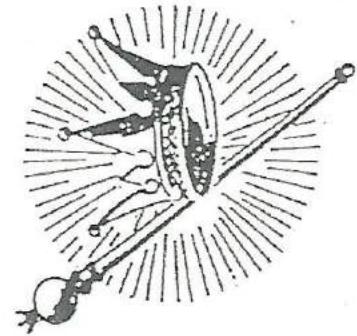
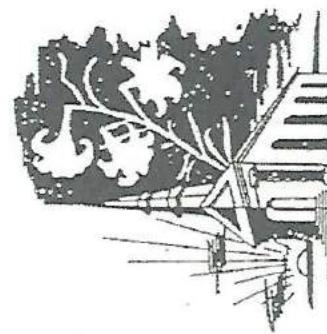


THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LAW

GRACE

KINGDOM

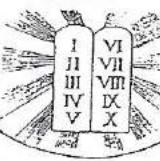


MT. 3:2-3; 4:17	MT. 3:12	MT. 12-13	MT. 16	Acts 1- Revelation	MT. 25:32
KINGDOM ANNOUNCED	KINGDOM OFFERED	CHURCH REJECTED	RAPTURE ANNOUNCED	KINGDOM ANTICIPATED	KINGDOM REOFFERED INSTITUTED

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT For Whom?

CONCEPT OF THE KINGDOM

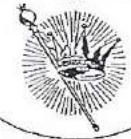
Law



Grace



Kingdom



MT. 3:2-3; 4:17	MT. 3-12	MT. 12— 13	MT. 16	Acts 1- Revelation	Revelation	MT. 25:32
Kingdom Announced	Kingdom Offered	Kingdom Rejected	Church Announced	Rapture Anticipated	Kingdom Reoffered	Kingdom Instituted

CONTRAST
OF THE
VIEWS

2

Interim

PREPARATION

Inheritance

PROCLAMATION

PARTICIPATION

4

Institution

ARRANGEMENT OF
MATTHEW
ABSENCE OF
CHURCH TRUTH
ADDRESS OF
INHERITORS

CONTENT
OF THE
SERMON

REPRESENTATIVES	S. L. Johnson	Chafer	Ryrie
REASONS FOR THE VIEWS:	Persecution of disciples Prayer for the Kingdom Prospect of rewards	Preparation for disciples Perfection of the citizens Prompting to repentance	Possession of the land Peace on earth Presence of the Messiah



The Sermon on the Mount: Law, Grace or Kingdom?

Hermeneutical Approach and Eschatological Application

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

The Sermon on the Mount is a problem passage of the first magnitude. It is one of Christ's three major discourses. The Upper Room Discourse deals with church age truth, the Olivet Discourse with the tribulation, and the Sermon on the Mount with the kingdom. We have rejected the ecclesiastical interpretation of the Sermon because of its place in the arrangement of Matthew (see diagram on the final page). It comes long before the announcement of the church and, indeed, forms part of the kingdom offer. Furthermore, the Sermon lacks Church truth, such as salvation by faith, prayer in the name of Christ, and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. While certain truths of the Sermon seem to be repeated in the Epistles, similarity does not mean identity. The addressees of the Sermon are subjects of the kingdom rather than members of the Body of Christ. The church was to them as yet a mystery. The bona fide offer of the kingdom forms the interpretive key for the sermon. Actually, both the interim view and the millennial view are correct in certain respects. The Sermon on the Mount, rightly understood, involves three aspects. It is taught to the disciples who lived during the time of the proclamation of the kingdom. Further, it involves their preparation of the kingdom, and also deals with the participation in the kingdom.

1b. The Sermon relates to the proclamation of the kingdom.

Various passages of the Sermon definitely relate to the period just prior to the establishment of the kingdom, such as the persecution of the disciples, the prayer for the kingdom, and the future prospects of rewards. Since the kingdom was officially rejected in Matthew 12, the promise of the kingdom was taken from the Jews of Christ's time, and given to another generation (Mt. 21:43), living during the tribulation, when the disciples would once again expect the coming of the King and His kingdom. The so-called Lord's Prayer will be especially relevant then, as the disciples pray that God's will be done on earth, where the Wilful King of Daniel 11 has free reign. The request for deliverance from the Evil One will then be made by those who suffer under Antichrist's reign of terror.

2b. The Sermon describes the proper preparation for the kingdom.

Lewis S. Chafer is correct in seeing the sermon as spelling out the entrance requirements for the kingdom. It is the "pure in heart" (5:8) who alone shall see God. The citizens of the kingdom need a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (5:20). In fact, Christ requires of them the absolute perfection of God (5:48). The disciples must have responded in utter amazement. How could they be pure in heart, more righteous than the Pharisees and as perfect as God? The answer lies in Christ's concluding illustration of the house built on the rock (7:24-27). Those disciples who heard Christ's sayings and did them would endure and enter the kingdom. The message of the Messiah would produce faith and works in the attentive disciples, qualifying them to enter the straight gate of the kingdom (7:13).

3b. The Sermon outlines the disciples' participation in the kingdom.

Ryrie stresses that the Sermon pictures "certain aspects of life in the kingdom and thus in a certain restricted sense is a sort of constitution of the kingdom" (*Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 82). The inheritance of the land will then be a blessed reality. The turning of the other cheek and the giving of one's possessions to anyone who asks, will then be tolerable because of the personal presence of the Prince of Peace. Especially in the Kingdom will His citizens function as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (5:13-14)

4b. The Sermon provides high ethical principles for any dispensation, and any people.

As a guide for daily conduct, the Sermon is no more applicable to the church age believers than are the Ten Commandments. By interpretation, the Sermon is for the subjects of the kingdom, giving them guidelines for life in anticipation of the kingdom, detailing the qualifications for entrance into the kingdom and outlining their participation in the kingdom. Once one realizes these three major purposes for the Sermon on the Mount, it becomes possible to rightly divide the teachings of the Sermon and assign each paragraph to its proper purpose. But, like the entire Old Testament, which, while not written to us, is certainly for us, so the principles of the Sermon may be used with great profit by the church age believers.

Consistent dispensationalists have been unjustly accused of writing off this portion of the Word of God as irrelevant for today. Yet dispensationalists insist that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And they recognize the necessary distinction which others refuse to see, that between interpretation and application. He who would rightly divide (II Tim. 2:15)--rather than recklessly distort (II Cor. 4:2)--the Word of God, must know that while each passage of Scripture has many applications, it has only

one correct interpretation.

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