

# THE MESSAGE OF THE KING

## The Gospel of Mark 4:1-41

### Bible Study Tools

**Parables:** One of the most famous teaching techniques of Jesus was the use of parables. The "Sunday School" definition is: "An earthly story with a heavenly meaning." This passage defines why Jesus used parables. It may surprise you when you read it. In some ways parables both hide meaning and reveal meaning.

When **interpreting parables**, think about the context in which they are given. What is happening at this point in the narrative? Who is the audience? Where was it given? Why did the author include this parable in this particular place in the story? Many times, parables are given in groups. How do the parables relate to each other? Are there elements in one parable that help to clarify the meaning of one of the others?

**Old Testament Quotes:** Pay careful attention to the use of the OT in this passage. How is Jesus using the OT context to clarify his purpose for teaching as he does?

### Questions to Consider

- Read the parable of the Sower and its interpretation. Think about the point at which it is included in Jesus' story. What is it describing?
- The disciples asked Jesus about the parable... in other words they didn't get it! Why is this parable so key?
- What is the "Secret of the Kingdom of God?" and how does it relate to the "inside/outside" theme of the book?
- Where does the OT quote come from and why is it so shocking?
- "...from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away..." What is Jesus referring to? Look at the context.
- What is the meaning of the Parable of the Scatterer of seed?

### Comments & Applications

**A Prophet** like in the OT. Jesus is different than we tend to think. He is using his words to bring judgment on those who have hardened their hearts.

**Preaching to the Crowd:** Think about how these parables were received by the listeners who sat on the banks of the lake. Did they understand? Did they have any hope of understanding?

**The Storm** The Sea of Galilee is part of the Great Rift Valley. The winds can come through the valley and cause a powerful storm called a "Sharkia" (Arabic for "shark").

**Jonah:** This story reminds us of the opening events of the book of Jonah. Look it up, read it, and find points of comparison. What do you think is the connection between the two stories?

**Application:** Think about how this story relates to your life in times of trouble and testing.

