

Matthew 14:34-36

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-14/matthew-1434-36/>

Jesus and disciples arrive ashore and the word quickly spreads of His arrival. The people bring many who are sick to be healed by Jesus.

The parallel gospel accounts of this event are found in Mark 6:53-56 and John 6:22-71.

After Jesus came to the disciples and calmed the storm Jesus and the disciples *crossed over* the sea. Geopolitically, *they* had left the province of Gaulanitis and *crossed over* the provincial border into Galilee. Matthew and Mark report that *they came to land at Gennesaret* (Mark 6:33). John however reports that *they* landed at the city of Capernaum (John 6:24). *Gennesaret* is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Chinnereth,” which is what the Israel called the Sea of Galilee from the time of Joshua and the conquest.

The phrase *came to land at Gennesaret* has two possible meanings. It could mean the town of *Gennesaret*, located on western shore of Galilee. The town was halfway between the cities of Magdala (which was situated on the western shore at the lake’s north/south midpoint) and Capernaum (which was located on the northern shore at the lake’s east/west midpoint). But the phrase *came to land at Gennesaret* could also mean the shoreline between the cities of *Gennesaret* and Capernaum. This shoreline was often called “the plain of *Gennesaret*.” It seems Matthew and Mark meant this second meaning, making their account compatible with John’s account. Matthew and Mark identify the region that Jesus and disciples *came* ashore. John identifies the city.

Unsurprisingly, *the men of that place* recognized Jesus. Capernaum and the surrounding region was where Jesus initiated *His* ministry. Here He taught about the kingdom, called many of *His* disciples, and performed numerous miracles. This was where Jesus’s ministry was unofficially headquartered. Moreover, it was many of these people who trekked the dozen-mile or more round trip to see Jesus and were among the five thousand men who miraculously fed by *Him* the previous evening.

When they recognized Him, they quickly sent word into all that surrounding district of Jesus’s whereabouts. The news of Jesus’s miracle feeding the multitudes with only a few loaves and fish had already travelled around the entire lake. Boats from the town of Tiberias on the southwest shore had already set out for Gaulanitis where Jesus had performed the miracle and was last seen in public (John 6:23). Jesus, of course, having walked across the sea, was no longer there. And they were still searching for *Him* when they were given the *word* that He was in Capernaum.

Matthew and Mark report that the people *brought to Jesus all who were sick*. Some of *them* even carried those who could not walk on pallets *to Him* to be healed (Mark 6:55). *The sick* and injured *implored* Jesus to see if He would allow them to *just touch the fringe of His cloak* in the belief that they might be *cured*. *The fringe of His cloak* refers to the tassels of His rabbinic shawl.

The people supposed that a rabbi's tassels displayed the righteousness of that rabbi and somehow stored and released any power the rabbi had. (This was what the woman with the twelve year hemorrhage also believed in Matthew 9:20-22). The religious leaders also preyed upon the people's supposition and lengthened their tassels to advertise their "righteousness" (Matthew 23:5). Matthew and Mark factually report that *as many as touched it were cured*.

Jesus did more than just heal the *sick* on this day. John reports that Jesus also taught in the synagogue at Capernaum (John 6:26-71) correlating His recent miracle of feeding the five thousand with God's miraculous provision of manna during the time of Moses. In a discussion with the Jews, Jesus identified Himself as the bread from heaven. There Jesus told them that *His* body was the true food, and His blood the true drink that must be consumed in order to live forever. These statements were misunderstood and turned many Jews, including many of his disciples, away from *Him*.

Biblical Text

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent word into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured.