

Parable of the Wheat & Tares

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In **"The Parable of the Sower"**, we learned that not all people react to the Word of the kingdom in the same way
1. Some with hard hearts and dull ears would not even allow the Word time to germinate in their hearts
 2. Others would receive the Word, but either persecution or things in this life would render them fruitless
 3. Only those with good and noble hearts, who receive the Word with patience and keep it, will bear the intended fruit in their lives
 4. Thus the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" will be received only by some, and not all
- B. This truth was illustrated further when Jesus taught **"The Parable Of the Wheat And Tares"**...
1. **Recorded only by Matthew**, the parable itself is found in **Mt 13:24-30**
 2. Jesus' purpose is clearly to teach principles related to "the kingdom of heaven"
 - a. For he begins with "The kingdom of heaven is like..."
 - b. Therefore Jesus intends to reveal principles related to the "rule of God" as it would soon be manifested in the Person of His Son
- C. Like **"The Parable Of The Sower"**, this parable is one of the few in which we have Jesus' own explanation...
1. The explanation was given in response to the disciples' inquiry **Mt 13:36**
 2. And the explanation is found in **Mt 13:37-43** -
- D. In this study, we shall focus on Jesus' explanation of the parable, and then draw some truths from it

THE PARABLE EXPLAINED

A. IN ANSWER TO THE DISCIPLES' REQUEST, JESUS IDENTIFIES...

1. **THE SOWER - "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man"**
 - a. Christ, who in His preaching went about proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom - cf. **Mt 4:23**
 - b. Who is identified in Daniel's vision as one who received a kingdom – **Dan. 7:13-14**
 - c. Who after His ascension claimed to have received such authority – **Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21**
2. **THE FIELD - "The field is the world"**
 - a. Into which the Son of Man came to sow the seed

- b. Over which the Son of Man now exercises His authority, i.e., His kingship
- cf. **Mt 28:18; 1 Pe 3:22; Re 1:5**

3. **THE GOOD SEED (WHEAT) - "The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom"**

- a. Those who gladly own Jesus as their Lord and King, submitting to Him freely
- b. I.e., His disciples, who observe all that He commands - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**
- c. When we compare this with "The Parable of the Sower", we come up with slightly mixed metaphors...
 - 1. The disciples are those who constitute the "good soil", in which the seed has been sown (The Parable Of The Sower)
 - 2. But in The Parable of the Wheat and Tares, the disciples are the "good seed" themselves
- d. Thus, when one receives the "seed" of the kingdom (the Word of God), they become "good seed" (a son of the kingdom)

4. **THE TARES - "The tares are the sons of the wicked one"**

- a. Those later defined as they that.
 - 1. Offend
 - 2. Practice lawlessness - cf. **Mt 13:41**
- b. Though within the realm of the Lord's reign (for the Lord will later gather them out of His kingdom), they clearly are not submitting to the Lord's authority!
- c. Their actions reveal that they are really "sons of the wicked one"!

5. **THE ENEMY - "The enemy who sowed them is the devil"**

- a. Who tried to tempt Christ and failed - cf. **Mt 4:1-11**
- b. Who now tries to destroy the efforts of Christ to save souls and enlarge the influence of His kingly rule

6. **THE HARVEST - "The harvest is the end of the age"**

- a. That "age" in which...
 - 1. The gospel of the kingdom is being preached
 - 2. People who receive the gospel can become the "sons of the kingdom"
-- I.e., the present gospel dispensation - cf. **Co 1:13; Re 1:9**
- b. An "age" that will end with a great "harvest", identified elsewhere as the glorious coming and appearance of our Lord - cf. **Mt 26:31-32; 1 Ti 6:14-15**

7. **THE REAPERS - "The reapers are the angels"**

- a. Angels will accompany Christ when He comes again - **2 Th 1: 7-9**
- b. They will separate the wicked from among the just - cf. **Mt13:49**

[Having identified the various elements of the parable...]

B. JESUS STRESSES THE MAIN POINTS OF THE PARABLE...

1. In **verse 40**...
 - a. The problem of the "tares" will not be fully addressed until the "harvest"
 - b. This is done out of consideration for the "good seed" (cf. **Mt 13:29**)
2. In **verse 41**...
 - a. It is at the end of the age that the Son of Man will finally resolve this problem
 - b. With His angels He will "gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness" (i.e., the sons of the wicked one)
3. In **verse 42**...
 - a. Those so gathered out of His kingdom will properly dealt with!
 - b. Cast into "the furnace of fire", where there will be "wailing and gnashing of teeth!"
4. In **verse 43**...
 - a. The blessedness of the "righteous" (the good seed, the sons of the kingdom) is described
 - b. After the harvest they will "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"!

[Jesus ends His explanation of the parable with the same admonition that followed the telling of The Parable Of The Sower:

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear" - Mt 13:9

Do we therefore hear what Jesus is saying? Or are we dull of hearing and hard of heart? For those willing to listen, there are several truths to be gleaned from this parable as it relates to the kingdom of heaven, the church, and to our personal lives...]

TRUTHS GLEANED FROM THE PARABLE

A. CHRIST IS LONG-SUFFERING, SO YOU CAN GROW!

1. Why does Christ suffer so long with the wicked around us?
2. Why does He not come in judgment against the "sons of the wicked one?"
3. Perhaps to give "you" (a son of the kingdom) a time to grow!
 - a. In the parable, it was out of concern for the "wheat" that the "tares" were allowed to remain - **Mt 13:29**
 - b. As Peter indicated, it is the Lord's longsuffering that prompts any seeming delay in His coming - cf. **2 Peter 3:9**
 - So while Christ is certainly desirous that "all" men come to repentance, He has a special interest in those "sons of the kingdom" who are still growing!

B. THIS PARABLE DOES NOT PRECLUDE CHURCH DISCIPLINE...

1. Some have sought to use this parable to say that church discipline should not be carried out
2. Yet that would go contrary to the teachings of Jesus Himself, and that of His apostles
 - a. Jesus taught there would be times for church discipline - **Mt 18:15-17**
 - b. Paul instructed the churches in Corinth and Thessalonica concerning the need and methodology of church discipline - **1 Co 5:1-13; 2 Th 3:6-15**
3. The point of this parable is that Jesus Himself will not do anything visible until the end of the age when He comes with His angels
4. Those in the church, however, have a personal responsibility to withdraw from those brethren who refuse to repent of sin

C. THE KINGDOM IS BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE!

1. In **verse 41**, the Son of Man will "gather out of His kingdom", so the kingdom is in existence prior to the end of the age when the Son of Man comes with His angels
2. In **verse 43**, it is after the harvest that the righteous "will shine forth in the kingdom of their Father"
3. As taught by Paul, Christ rules now and will turn the kingdom over to His Father when He comes again - cf. **1 Co 15:23-26**
 - a. He is not coming to establish a kingdom (contra the premillennialist)
 - b. He is coming to deliver a kingdom back to His Father!

D. ONE MAY BE IN THE KINGDOM NOW, BUT NOT IN THE FUTURE!

1. Note that the angels will gather certain ones "out of His kingdom" - **Mt 13:41**
2. Those ones who were "in the kingdom" are then "cast into the furnace" – **Mt 13:42**
3. Who would these be?
 - a. Those who "offend" (cause others to stumble)
 1. Against which Jesus warned His disciples - **Mt 18:6-7**
 2. Against which Paul warned the Christians at Corinth and Rome - **1 Co 8:11-13; 10:31-11:1; Ro 16:17-18** (cf. **14:13, 19-21**)
 - b. Those who "practice lawlessness" (do things without authority)
 1. Remember the warnings of Jesus and John - **Mt 7:21-23; 2 Jn 9**
 2. The way to avoid lawlessness is given in **Co 3:17**
4. Because of the very real danger of not "entering our heavenly rest", we find warnings to persevere - cf. **He 3:12-14; 4:1-2, 11**

E. A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT IS THE REWARD OF THE WICKED!

1. We saw where those "that offend" and who "practice lawlessness" would...

- a. Be cast into the **"furnace of fire"**
- b. Experience **"wailing and gnashing of teeth"**
2. This punishment of the wicked is a recurring theme in several of the parables...
 - a. The Parable Of The Dragnet - cf. **Mt 13:49-50**
 - b. The Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant - cf. **Mt 18:34-35**
3. And as described in the Judgment Scene, Jesus talks of a place prepared for the wicked - cf. **Mt 25:41, 45-46**
4. Thus a proper proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom must of necessity include a warning to those who do not receive the kingdom!

CONCLUSION

- A. Indeed, this very parable is a warning to all not to allow themselves to be influenced by the wicked one!
 1. As Peter wrote, our adversary is very much seeking to destroy us!
- **1 Peter 5:8**
 2. But if we can allow the word of God to abide in us, we can overcome the wicked one - cf. **1 John 2:14**
- B. We learn from this parable, then, that the kingdom of heaven...
 1. Will spread as people become "sons of the kingdom" (by heeding the Son of Man)
 2. Will not preclude the efforts and influence of the devil (so expect to see some "tares")
 3. Though inaugurated with the Son of Man's first coming (especially with His ascension to the right hand of God and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost - **Acts 2**), the kingdom of heaven will not be fully culminated until...
 - a. The Son of Man returns with His angels
 - b. He gathers all things out of His kingdom that offend and practice lawlessness
 - c. And delivers the kingdom to God (cf. **1 Corinthians 15:24**)
- C. At that time...
 - a. We will have an abundant entrance **"into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"** - cf. **2 Pe 1:11**
 - b. **"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"** - **Mt 13:43**
- D. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**