

# The Parables of Jesus

## - The Wheat and the Tares

(Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43)

Matthew 13:24-30 - *"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade*

*was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."*

This parable was given during the same setting as the "Parable of the Sower and the Four Soils" and the "Parable of the Good Seed Sown." Jesus was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee teaching His disciples as well as many from the region who had heard of Him and came to hear Him. This parable is only found in the Gospel of Matthew. Although this parable is found later on in the narrative of Matthew 13, it is actually given at the same time to the multitude as the "Parable of the Sower and the Four Soils" and the "Parable of the Good Seed Sown" (Mark). It was later on in the evening when Jesus was alone with His disciples that Jesus explained and expounded on this parable (Matthew 13:36-43) and the other parables to His disciples.

The "Parable of the Wheat and the Tares" follows the same train of thought as the two previous parables concerning the sowing of "seed" and the various aspects of what takes place both, to the seed that was sown, as well as the various conditions to which that seed sown would find itself. In the "Parable of the Wheat and the Tares," Jesus is teaching His disciples concerning what they should expect and what they would encounter as they would soon be sent forth as His ambassadors and the Father's children in casting forth the "seed" of the Gospel message and the Kingdom of God on this earth.

Jesus prefaces this parable, as well as many of the parables He is using in this time of teaching, with the phrase, *"The Kingdom of heaven is likened..."* As mentioned in previous discussions of the parables, this phrase is considered a "simile." A "simile" is a figure of speech involving the comparison between two different things for the purpose of giving emphasis to what is being said or taught. It allows the hearer to better grasp and understand the true meaning of what is being brought forth by using thoughts, ideas or images that the person listening would be familiar with and relate to, thereby, hopefully being able to better understand the truth that is being taught. By using the phrase, *"So is the Kingdom of heaven..."*, Jesus was saying that what He was about to teach is a principle found in the Kingdom of heaven which gives insight to the ways of God and His Kingdom here upon the earth.

Jesus is using something in the natural realm that most people were familiar with (in this case things having to do with farming and agriculture) to explain the ways of God. Jesus was teaching and preparing His disciples for the road that would soon be ahead for them. They may not have totally grasped these insights at the time. However, later on, after they had received the Holy Spirit, they were able to remember these parables and their meanings which helped them understand certain aspects of their ministry. As these parables and explanations were brought back to their remembrance by the Holy Spirit, they were better prepared for and had a better understanding of what they would be experiencing in bringing forth God's Kingdom upon the earth. He was preparing them with the facts that the "Kingdom of Heaven" on this earth would be much different than what they would be expecting.

Matthew 13:36-43 – *“Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*

In Matthew 13:36-43, Jesus, gives the disciples insight into the "characters" of this parable concerning who or what they represent. Let's review them.

- The "*man*" who is sowing the "*good seed*," Jesus refers to as the "Son of man." Therefore, He is referring to Himself.
- The "*field*" refers to this world. "*The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*" - Psalm 24:1
- The "*good seed*" represents the "children of the Kingdom." These are truly disciples of Jesus and who are in oneness with Jesus and the Father. These are those whose hearts were prepared for the Good News of salvation through Jesus and received it with gladness. Now they are primed to bring forth good fruit - some thirty, some sixty, some one hundred fold.
- The "*tares*" - The word "tare" is a transliteration of the Greek word, "*zizánion*." It is also referred to as a type of "darnel." "Darnel" is a weedy rye grass with poisonous seeds, often found in grain fields in the Middle East. It resembles wheat in every way until you take the grain out of its husk. The grains are black.
- Figuratively, speaking it refers to those who may look like, sound like and even act like they are children of God. However, inwardly they are not. Instead their hearts are full of wickedness, deceit and deception. The key is that they **look just like a child of God** on the outside but inwardly they are truly children of the devil. Their purpose is to mingle into the Body of Christ and very subtly take over and draw away people from the truth and then ultimately draw them away from God.

It refers to what Jesus spoke of in the conclusion of His "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 7:21-23, "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"

- The "*enemy*" is obviously referring to the devil and all forces of darkness.
- The "*reapers*" are God's angels that oversee and assist in the final judgment. (Matthew 25:31-46)
- The "*time of the harvest*" is the consummation of the ages at the final judgment (Revelation 20:12-15)

Jesus continues to explain this parable to His disciples by telling them that there will be a separating of those who are truly the disciples of His (the "good seed") from those that may seem to look like His but are not (the "tares"). Jesus teaches that the "righteous," those who are truly His disciples, will shine for all to see. The "light" that is within them, as expressed in Matthew 5:16, will shine forth brightly and they will be with the Father in His Kingdom forever and ever.

Jesus then uses His favorite saying, "*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" Why, after just giving an explanation of this parable to His disciples, does Jesus say this? Didn't He just give them the explanation of the parable? Obviously, He was saying that there was even more insight to this parable that they could glean from if they truly were open and ready to receive and grasp it. Let's see what it could possibly be.

We know that Jesus was preparing His disciples to be the ones that would bring forth the Truth of God's Word by continuing to declare that it pointed to the Good News of salvation through Jesus. This we know through Jesus' teaching in the "Parable of the Sower and the Four Soils."

In this parable we read in Matthew 13:25 that "*men slept.*" Who were these men? They were those who were entrusted by the master to keep guard over His field where He had sowed the good seed. Jesus was referring to His disciples, both the twelve at that time and any other disciple of Jesus that would follow which includes both leadership and those in the Body of Christ, today. Jesus was telling His disciples that if they did not "keep awake" and guard the precious "seed," guard the truth of the Word of God, the enemy will come in and "sow the tares" among the wheat. The "wicked ones" will be **planted by the enemy** to be among and come alongside the righteous.

As we learned from our definition of what a "tare" is, this will be another "type of seed." We must take note here that one of the principles of God that was established in Genesis 1 is that every seed will produce "after its own kind." The enemy's "seed" cannot produce anything else but "its own kind" – enemies of God, His Word and His people. There will be counterfeits planted by the "enemy" of God in the "field" (the earth) who will come looking and sounding like they are of the "household of faith" but are not.

They will come among the believers and try to sway them into the wrong ways. They will come as preachers and wonderful looking teachers of the Word of God that will bring false doctrines. Paul refers to these as He warns in His letter to Timothy to beware of those that bring forth "*doctrines of devils.*" (1Timothy 4:1) He also refers to these in 2Corinthians 11:13-15, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*"

Proverbs 5:3-5 tells us, "*For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.*" Jesus Himself warns us in Matthew 24:24 " *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*"

The deceivers and their deceptive, wicked doctrines and ideas will be planted alongside of God's "good seed," the Good News, the Gospel that leads to salvation that is found only in and through Jesus. John 14:6 is very clear in this as Jesus teaches that, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

So who is this enemy? As we previously read, Jesus tells us that it is the devil. It is the devil who "sows" his doctrine of lies in the midst of God's people as well as in the world. It can take the form of the world's "religions" such as Islam, Buddhism, Universalism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Unitarianism, etc. It

may look good. It sounds good. However, the roots of those religions are rooted in hell. They are "doctrines of devils."

It can take place within the "Church." Throughout the Church's history this has taken place. Denominationalism, sects and cults have sprung up and have flourish and are still flourishing pretending to be "Christian" but inwardly are not. New "teachings and doctrines" arise. Some of those "teachings and doctrines" that are entering the Body these days are as such:

- "The Word of God was for a different time and a different society then what we live in today."
- "We need to "update" God and His Word to "fit in" with today's culture and lifestyle."
- "God understands when we don't keep His commandments." "Hey, God is bigger than that."
- It can come through extreme inordinate overbalancing of a specific aspect of God's Kingdom and character which focuses in on one aspect and neglects the others. I am referring to the "hyper- grace movement;" the "hyper-faith movement;" the "holiness movement;" etc.
- One of the greatest deceptions is that Jesus died for everyone (which He did) but they teach that "no one needs to be concerned about accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This is because He died for everyone; therefore everyone is saved from eternal damnation. So live your life any way you wish. Hey, we are all going to heaven anyway." This is known as the "Doctrine of Inclusion."- LIE!!! LIE!!! LIE!!!

Remember, as we discussed previously, the darnel will "look" outwardly as if it is good "wheat." Outwardly it "looks" and "sounds" good. However, once you remove the outward layers it reveals a fruit that is very "poisonous." Remember, it starts with a "seed" that comes from the enemy. It will be a very "slight" perversion or what may seem like a small diversion from what we know concerning God's Word. However, if left unchecked and allowed to continue it will "poison" the hearts of those that hear it from knowing and understanding the real truth concerning God and His Word.

Those that accept, as well as teach, these false doctrines will even present themselves as true believers (angels of light), however, inwardly they are not. They "look the look." They "talk the talk." But there is a very subtle difference, that if not careful, yes, even the "very elect" may fall prey to their deceptions.

The disciples were being warned by Jesus to "keep awake" and be aware that this **will happen**. Remember, as we previously discussed, Jesus' disciples were to be the ones who were to bring the real Truth of God concerning the way of salvation and living the lifestyle of a true disciple of Jesus. They were to be entrusted to bring forth the true doctrines, principles and precepts of God on His behalf.

However, as Jesus continues in His explanation of this parable, He presents a strange but yet interesting "twist." Notice that He says that when the "servants" (the angels) question the owner of the field (God) concerning what they should do with these "tares," he tells them to leave everything alone and let them grow together. It seems strange that the Father and Jesus would allow the "tares" to grow alongside the "wheat." Why would He allow that?

This is when you would need to be living at that time as well as being in an agricultural society. Those who were listening to Jesus understood what Jesus would have been saying. In those days it would many times be a common practice for farmers to actually plant "darnel" alongside the good wheat. The "darnel" or "tares" were really weeds and if you know anything about weeds they are usually very sturdy and tough. Farmers sometimes used the "darnel/ tares" to help keep the good wheat growing "straight and strong" The darnel being sturdy and tough would not allow the wheat to grow all scraggly and weak. It forced the wheat to grow straight and strong causing the wheat to dig even deeper roots.

In God's infinite wisdom, He allows the "tares," these workers of darkness with their false doctrines and teachings to be within the world, as well as within the Body of Christ because, whether we choose to believe it or not, they help the true Body of Christ, the true disciple of Jesus, to grow stronger. Why or how does it help the true believer grow stronger?

I believe it is because they help the true disciple grow in the truth. It causes those who truly desire God's Truth to seek after His Truth, His Word. As the believer seeks after God's truth, the Holy Spirit within, will come alongside and help the believer to "*rightly divide the Word of truth.*" (Hebrews 4:12) This causes and allows the true believer's "roots" to go down even deeper into the truth of God's Word. They grow stronger in their faith and in their walk as a child of God is kept on the straight and narrow path.

Knowing the truth and being steadfast in that truth will cause the true disciple to be able to know "why they believe, what they believe," for themselves so that they will not be easily deceived and enticed by "the other seed" and be drawn away. They will not be drawn away by every "wind and wave of doctrine" brought forth and spoken by these "tares." (Ephesians 4:14)

It is vital and so very, very important that believers know why he or she believes what they believe. It is important that the truth be real to, and be known within, each disciple of Jesus. If a person really knows that they know that they know that they know the truth, than the counterfeit is easy to be recognized and be exposed. We see this in the life of Jesus.

He was, is and always will be the Word. He was, is and always will be the Truth. He was, is and always will be the Life. Where ever He walked the deceptions, the works of darkness, the wiles of the enemy were always exposed and then dealt with. The devil tried this tactic with Jesus during the temptations in the wilderness in the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He used, or should we say misused ever so slightly, the Word of God to try to trick and deceive Jesus into doing something that was contrary to the Word of God, contrary to who He was. The religious leaders of that time tried to do the same with Jesus. It is and will be the same for the true disciple of Jesus. His Word is within. That is who we are. The enemy will try to deceive us into believing or living the lifestyle that is contrary to who we really are now as a child of God.

But... There will come a day when the "reapers" will come. They will separate the wheat from the tares. The truth of God's Word will be revealed. The deceptions will be exposed along with anyone who was used to bring forth those deceptions. Unfortunately, all those that chose to refuse the truth and accepted the lies will be separated unto a place of torment and be "burned."

However, God's truth will be revealed for all to see. Those that refused to accept the lies and deceptions but rather chose to stand firm and not compromise any of God's truths, His precepts, His principles and His commandments will be separated into God's "barns." They will be placed in God's "storehouse" where everything of His Kingdom is theirs to enjoy and partake of. They will be members of His "household of faith" and joint heirs with Jesus to all that is within the Kingdom. Most importantly, they will experience and enjoy "oneness" with Jesus and the Father for eternity. This is truly eternal life. (John 17:3, 21) Truly let those who have ears to hear, let them hear!!!