

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

LESSON 76 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5),

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

²⁷ 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?

²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

³⁰ 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.

Matthew 13:36-43

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

³⁸ The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Good Seed Sown in the Field

1 The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to the parable of the tares, Matthew 13:24, 25

2 The "man" who sowed the good seed is the Son of man, Matthew 13:24; 13:37;

Matthew 18:11 ¹¹ For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

3 The "field" in which the seed was sown is the world, Matthew 13:24; 13:38;

Psalms 2:8 ⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

4 The "good seed" are the children of the Kingdom, Matthew 13:24; 13:38;

Romans 8:16 ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

II The Tares Sown among the Wheat

1 The tares were sown while men slept (spiritually), Matthew 13:25;

Isaiah 60:2 ² For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

2 The "tares" are the children of the wicked one, Matthew 13:25; 13:38;

John 8:44 ⁴⁴ Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

3 The "enemy" who sowed the tares is the devil, Matthew 13:25; 13:39;

Ephesians 6:11 ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

III The Separation at the Harvest

1 The "harvest" is the end of the world, and the "reapers" the angels, Matthew 13:30; 13:39;

Mark 13:27 ²⁷ And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

2 The tares cannot be rooted up, lest the wheat also be rooted up, Matthew 13:28, 29;

Acts 15:14-17 ¹⁴ Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

¹⁵ And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

¹⁶ After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

¹⁷ That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

3 The final separation comes at the time of the harvest, Matthew 13:30;

Matthew 25:31-32 ³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

Daniel 12:2 ² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;

³⁹ The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

⁴⁰ As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

⁴¹ 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;

⁴² And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

⁴³ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

4 The "tares" are gathered and burned with fire (everlasting fire), Matthew 13:30; 13:40-42;

Matthew 25:41 ⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

5 The "wheat" is gathered into His "barn" (the Kingdom of their Father), Matthew 13:43;

Daniel 12:3 ³ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

NOTES:

The parable of the Wheat and the Tares, like the parable of the Sower, is interpreted by the Lord. And we therefore need not be in any doubt as to the meaning of either. The former, we found, has to do with the kind of reception given by men to His Word — a very vital matter; for upon this reception depends one's entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. And this second parable very appropriately follows it, for it is a progressive step concerning the Kingdom, revealing the eventual state of those who were the "good ground" in whose hearts His Word was planted.

The Good Seed

The "Sower" in this instance, as in the former parable, is the Son of man (Matthew 13:37), and the "field" in which the good seed is sown is the world (Matthew 13:38), while the "good seed," He explains, are the children of the Kingdom.

Thus, there is disclosed in this parable the great purpose for which Jesus came into this world, as Simon Peter declared in the council at Jerusalem when testifying of his visit to the house of Cornelius, as told by James: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). With the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's saving grace was extended to the Gentiles. And for nineteen centuries the Son of man has been seeking out "a people for his name." These are the "children of the Kingdom." among whom is found men of every kindred, nation, and tongue_ "And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). This work shall continue until the last vacant chair at the "marriage supper of the Lamb" is assigned.

The Tares among the Wheat

But while this great work of sowing the "good seed" has continued, another work has been going on in the dark, "while men slept." The "tares" in this parable, we are told, are the children of the wicked one (**Matthew 13:38** ³⁸ The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*) and the "enemy" who sows them is the devil (**Matthew 13:39** ³⁹ The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels). From the time of Adam down, the devil, too, has been seeking "children" for his kingdom. And in this Dispensation of Grace he has been working more zealously than ever, because he knows his time is short. And he has succeeded in winning a great following "while men slept." for multitudes have been lulled into spiritual slumber, and are now on the "broad way to destruction." Satan's kingdom will soon be established for a brief season (**Revelation 13:1-18** ¹ And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. ² And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and

the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. ⁴ And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ⁵ And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. ⁶ And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. ⁷ And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. ⁸ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. ⁹ If any man have an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. ¹¹ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. ¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, ¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. ¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. ¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. ¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six), at which time the "great tribulation" will be visited upon the earth. And it rests with men to decide now in which kingdom they are going to be found in that day.

The Dispensation of Grace

The sowing of the "good seed" and the sowing of the "tares" is thus going on while "this Gospel of the Kingdom" is being preached in all the world (**Matthew 24:14** ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come). And when the servants of the householder discovered the tares in the field, they said, "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then bath 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."

Certain students of the Bible who have traveled through the Holy Land believe that by "tares" is meant a poisonous plant called the bearded darnel, which is almost indistinguishable from the wheat while the two are in the blade, but which can be separated without difficulty when they come into the ear. This plant is frequently found sprinkled among the wheat, and so entwined with it that it cannot be rooted up without damaging the latter; hence the necessity of waiting until the harvest. God is therefore permitting the "wheat" and the "tares" to grow together. While His saving grace is abounding; for this is the sowing season, so to speak, when He is preparing a people for that heavenly Kingdom, even amid the evil surroundings of this wicked world. The children of the Kingdom may not be so distinguishable now from the children of the world as they will be later on; nevertheless it is possible under these evil conditions to live the Christian life. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation bath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who is the "sower" in this parable?
- 2 What do the "tares," the "wheat," and the "field" symbolize?
- 3 In what dispensation do the events recorded here take place?
- 4 Why could not the tares be rooted up when found growing with the wheat?
- 5 Why does God permit evil to continue in this world, as is recorded in Ecclesiastes 8:11? What does the "barn" symbolize?
- 6 What period does the "harvest" symbolize in this parable?
- 7 What is done with the tares and the wheat in the harvest? and what does this disposition of them symbolize?
- 8 Quote a verse of Scripture substantiating your answer to the above question.
- 9 What must a sinner do in respect to this change from a child of the wicked one to a child of the Kingdom?
- 10 What kind of life must he live in order to gain that Kingdom at the harvest?

world" (Titus 2:11, 12). God has called us to walk with Him here below, like Enoch of old, separated in heart from the world, the flesh, and the devil. And the call is still going out into all the world, The "whosoever will" may respond and become a child of the Kingdom.

The Harvest Time

But some day the "sowing season" will be ended. the "wheat" will be matured and gathered into His "barn." The Householder, in reference to the wheat and tares, said to His servants, "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." The "harvest," the Lord explains, is the end of the world, and the "reapers" are the angels, and the "barn" into which the "wheat" is gathered is that heavenly Kingdom, for which the children of the Kingdom are waiting and longing. Judgment in that day will be rained upon the children of the wicked one. but it will be a day of joy and gladness for the redeemed of the Lord. For that day shall be ushered in with the coming of the Lord back to earth again, not as the lowly Man of Nazareth but as Judge of all the earth.

And all nations shall be gathered before Him, and He shall separate them, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats, with His sheep on His right hand, and the goats on the left. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father,, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Oh, may that day be hastened when we shall see Him face to face! "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). In that day the "wheat" shall be discerned from the "tares."

**"Not for ease or worldly pleasure,
Nor for fame my prayer shall be;
Gladly will I toil and suffer,
Only let me walk with Thee."**