

# Lessons from the Parable of the Wheat and Tares

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Robert P. Myers

## Mat. 13:24-30; 36-43

It's hard to see things from God's perspective. For instance, we may ask ourselves frequently why He puts up with virally wicked men on this earth. They suppress righteousness, destroy lives, wreck societies, bring untold sorrow and woe upon their fellow human beings. They seem to do most of this without a single pang of conscience...in fact, many of them think they do their god a service...and they may...if their god is not our God. Also, we notice that men like this always seem to be megalomaniacs...that's somebody who has a psychological disorder which gives them an uncontrollable greed from power. But, the worst part of what they do is that it is open defiance of all that we recognize as being the principles of God. Nevertheless, they go on in their role as rebels against the authority of God, and He simply seems to watch from heaven...or so we think.

But, God does more than simply passively watch from heaven. In this parable of the tares, we can easily see that given time, He will be doing far more than that. It's not hard for us to see the doom awaiting the wicked at the end of days, as it is spelled out in this parable. Now, while we don't wish this fate on anyone, we know that there will be some who come to this end. But, meantime, I believe there is much more being taught by this parable than just the bare warning to rebels against God. So, while we are going to mention this at the end of the message, I want us to think about some other things that this parable teaches, which we may miss if we to too quickly to the punch line when we read it. May the Lord enable us to see several things starting with **vv. 24 and 37**, its companion verse.

### I. Christ's role and ownership in the world (vv. 24 and 37)

- "His field" (the field is the world)
  - ▶ **Psalms 24:1 A Psalm of David.** The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; **the world, and they that dwell therein.**
  - ▶ Good seed in His field (good seed are the children of the kingdom)

### II. The devil's role and lack of ownership in the world - vv. 25 and 39

- also v. 28 - an enemy hath done this
- According to the truth revealed in this parable, Satan plants the tares of the world - they are identified in v. 41 as things that offend and as they that do iniquity.
- In **John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11**, and in **Eph. 3:2**, Satan's status in the world is identified. In every case he is only identified as a prince (first in authority) related to the world (the system we know as fallen creation) and physically, the air; never referred to as a lord or king

### III. The seed sown

- The contrast between the seed and produce of the two sowers - **vv. 27 and 38**
  - ▶ The two different kinds of people here on earth provides a contrast (seen by creation) between the seed of Christ and the seed of the devil

- **1John 3:10** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.
- Look at the photo of the darnel and the wheat I handed out.
  - There is a very similar growth form; both produce grain; but, the grain looks different; also, it is said that the grain of the darnel is poisonous.
  - Lesson: Without both wheat and tares on earth, no contrast could be made between the deadness of depraved and fallen man and the glorious difference Christ makes in a human life that is regenerated by the power of God.
- The owner's concern for the plants from the good seed - **vv. 28-29**
  - Lesson: the owners act of leaving the tares demonstrates the mercy of Christ toward His elect
    - Can you think of any ways this mercy is obvious? Some of us probably get our paycheck from unbelievers. It may very well be an unbeliever who provides you with some basic service; like banking, plumbing, electrical service, car repair, the clothes you buy and wear.
    - How about mercy from this aspect: some of us may have family that we love who are unbelievers. How would your emotions suffer if God suddenly rained down judgment on them?
- Notice that the owner's decision contrasts with the proposal of of the owner's servants - **v.28**
  - It is a common feeling among servants of Christ to wish to clean house (don't you wish you could say a word right now and rid the world of wickedness, so that only Christlikeness remained?)
    - In that zeal, we tend to overlook the collateral impacts of such action
    - It is also an inescapable fact that the only way to get rid of the tares is to kill them
      - Illustrate: there is a dog across the road from my house that barks 24/7. I would give almost anything if that dog would lose the ability to bark. I would like to kill it. Being a man, if it was my dog I WOULD kill it, getting it out of its misery, and saving the neighbors from misery because of it. But there are complications which prevent me from killing it. Its master, its master's kids who probably love it, my reputation as a servant of Christ. Regardless of what kind of pain it is to me for it to live another day, it has a purpose that goes beyond the fact that it is a constant sore spot to the neighborhood. So it is with the tares in the mind of Christ.
        - Lesson: So, we are taught a) that Christ has a purpose in passive forbearance concerning wicked men, and b) we are taught not attempt to root out tares.

#### **IV. Elimination of the tares will occur - vv. 30, 40-42**

- I mentioned the difference between the wheat and the tares or darnel. One thing that is a huge difference to the farmer today (they still have to deal with various species of darnel in wheat crops) is the size of the two grains. Wheat is big and fat compared to the small and more skinny darnel grain. So, the farmer can simply screen his wheat crop and the darnel seeds fall through a certain-sized screen and into the garbage pile to be burned.
- But, there is another feature difference between tares and wheat that are critical to us understanding the farmer's instructions to his servants about taking care of the tares. When wheat gets a full head of grain, the top of the stem droops over under the weight of the wheat grains. On the other hand, darnel's seed are much lighter and the stem remains standing

straight up even after the seeds are ripe. So, picture a field with wheat and darnel in it and what do you see? (Remembering that the farming situation in Jesus' day was manual [not combines or automated grain harvesters], does this explain why the farm owner tells the servants to gather the tares first, bind them in bundles and cast them into the fire?) AND, when wheat grains get ripe, they are a beige to brown color, but darnel grains turn black when ripe.

- **V. 42** - Note the response of those who offend and do iniquity after they are cast in the fire
- **V. 43** - Note the release of Christ's people as a result of Christ's cleanup
  - ▶ The glory of Christ which is within the people of God is diminished by the presence of evil in the world during the growth period. Once evil is removed, the glory is revealed.
- Things inferred:
  - ▶ The servants who discover and report the tares (**v. 27**) in the field are a different set of servants from the reapers who gather the crop in **v. 30**
  - ▶ Christ's people grow more humble as spiritual fruit ripens in their souls and lives
  - ▶ Unbelievers remain proud regardless of, or maybe because of, the fruit they produce
  - ▶ The difference between the two will be obvious to the angels of God