

# THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

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

LESSON 76 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

**BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

## Matthew 13:24-30

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

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

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

<sup>27</sup> 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?

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

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

<sup>30</sup> 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

<sup>36</sup> 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.

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

<sup>38</sup> The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;

**BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **The King Promised**

In the parables we are considering, Jesus tried to give His disciples an idea of the meaning of the Kingdom of Heaven. They knew some of the writings of the prophets, and understood that a King was promised to them who would come and avenge them of their enemies; and He would reign forever. Jeremiah had written: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah 23 : 5).

When Jesus came, those of spiritual vision could recognize Him as the King. The Scripture states of Joseph of Arimathæa, who asked for the body of Jesus, that he "also waited for the kingdom of God" (**Mark 15:43** <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus). When Nathanael answered the call of Jesus, he said: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). Jesus told the people that Zechariah's prophecy applied to Him: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass" (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:5). The sign on the cross when Jesus was crucified proclaimed: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

So we see that Jesus was a King, and His disciples believed this fact. But a king must have a kingdom; and Christ's followers were ever trying to find out when He would set up His kingdom. They expected Him miraculously to overthrow the Roman government which had held the Israelites in bondage for many years, and let them enjoy self-government in Palestine. They could picture in their minds Jesus upon an earthly throne, and they themselves having important positions in His court. Even after Jesus told them He was about to go to Jerusalem to be crucified, they argued about who would be greatest in His kingdom. It seems they could not realize that the Kingdom of God was not "meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

#### **The Disciples' Disappointment**

When Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem amid the loud acclaim of the throngs, the disciples were confident that the moment was at hand when He would proclaim Himself the King of the Jews. Now they would see the Romans humiliated, and they themselves would overthrow their civil rulers. How bitter must have been their disappointment upon their arrival in Jerusalem when Jesus showed no signs of aggression! Rather, within a week, He had submitted to death on the cross.

On the way to Emmaus, after the crucifixion, we find two of the disciples sadly discussing their disappointment. They said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21); but now He was gone and no kingdom had been set up!

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

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

<sup>41</sup> 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;

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

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

### **Christ's Kingdom**

But what about Christ's Kingdom? He had said Himself that He was a King; and a king must have a kingdom. Who, then, made up the Kingdom which owed allegiance to Jesus?

John the Baptist had announced, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Had he been mistaken? Had Jesus left this earth defeated? Oh, no! The Kingdom had had its beginning; the foundations had been laid for the great Millennial Reign, that time which is yet to come when Jesus will be King and "with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4). *Jesus* was on earth gathering about Him citizens for that heavenly Kingdom; and when He went back to Heaven, He commissioned His disciples to go into all the earth and call all men to repentance that they might have a part in the heavenly Kingdom. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So the disciples, after they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, went forth to preach the message of salvation that would prepare citizens for the heavenly Kingdom. The true ministers of God today are preaching the same message, "Ye must be born again"; and the Spirit of God is winning the hearts of men to the King of Glory who will come again to this earth and rule with His saints for a thousand years.

### **Growing Together**

When Jesus spoke to His disciples about the parable of the tares and wheat, He said that the householder told his servants to allow the tares to grow with the wheat until the time of harvest. Then he would command the reapers to gather the tares and place them in separate bundles and throw them into the fire to be burned. The wheat would then be clean to be gathered into the barn for use.

Jesus said the good seed was the children of the Kingdom, while the tares represented the children of Satan. He was not going to take His people out of the world as soon as they were saved, but they would have to live among the sinners until the time of harvest when He will send an angel to separate the good people from the bad people. Those who have died will be resurrected, and will be divided in the same manner as those who live to see the end of the world. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9).

### **Fruit of the Spirit**

Perhaps some of the "tares" might pretend to be Christians. When the plants were small, one could not tell the difference; but when the fruit began to show, the servants realized that there were weeds growing among the wheat. We know the Pharisees were very religious people and claimed to be the children of Abraham, but because they had sin in their hearts Jesus told them, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). Another time Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). That meant that you can tell which are the children of the heavenly Kingdom and which are the children of the enemy by the way they behave themselves. The citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven have these characteristics. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

### **Unwise Zeal**

The servants of the householder were very disappointed to find the tares growing among the wheat, and wanted to pull them up right away. The tares were a plant called darnel which vines itself about the good plants, and makes it very difficult to pull up without destroying the wheat with it.

We read in church history of times when religious fanatics would become so zealous for their belief that they would kill everyone who did not agree with them. In the time of Christ, when the Samaritans rebuffed Jesus His disciples wanted to call down fire from Heaven to destroy them, but Jesus rebuked James and John and said He had not come to destroy men's lives but to save them (**Luke 9:52-56** <sup>52</sup> And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. <sup>53</sup> And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? <sup>55</sup> But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. <sup>56</sup> For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village).

The tares and the wheat were already growing together then, and they continue to do so. When the end of the world comes, the time when the tares will be burned up, in flaming fire Jesus will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (II Thessalonians 1:8. 9).

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 What did the good seed represent?
- 2 Who were the tares?
- 3 How long were the wheat and the tares to grow together?
- 4 How do we become citizens of the heavenly Kingdom?
- 5 Who is the King?