

Matthew Chapter 13 Continued

Verses 24-27:

This parable serves as a warning to the laborers in the field (the world, verse 38).

Unlike the Jewish form of the kingdom in the Old Testament, where citizens could be easily recognized, during the church age converts will be made from all over the world and received upon their profession of faith.

Thus, it will be easier to slip in some counterfeits who profess the church, which is the subject of these parables.

The “enemy” is Satan and the “tares” (Greek zizanion, “darnel”), are false converts.

The darnel was a weed that resembled wheat but did not come to fruition.

The “good seed ... sprung up, and brought forth fruit” again, emphasizing that true converts produce fruitful lives.

By contrast, false converts produce no lasting fruit.

Matthew 13:24 "Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:"

This is the second parable (in Matthew 13).

Here, is a farmer going out to plant.

Of course, he plants good seed, or else it would be a waste of time to plant.

We know that we reap what we sow, if we want corn out of the field, we do not plant peas.

The kingdom of heaven is built with the seed of the Word being planted and growing.

Matthew 13:25 "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

“Tares”:

Probably darnel, a type of weed that can hardly be distinguished from wheat until after the head of it matures.

In an agricultural setting, sowing darnel in someone else’s wheat field was a way for enemies to destroy someone’s livelihood catastrophically.

It pictures Satan's efforts to deceive the church by mingling his children with God's, in some cases making it impossible for believers to discern the true from the false.

The parable is explained (in verses 36-43).

This sentence is so sad.

The wheat are the Christians; and this means that right in the midst of even the church, the enemy sneaks in and plants evil right beside the good.

Probably unaware to the owner of the land or the pastor.

You see, the farmer (God), would never plant tares.

This was an act of the devil himself.

Matthew 13:26-27 "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?"

This parable represents the present and future state of the gospel church; Christ's care of it, the devil's enmity against it, and the mixture there is in it of good and bad in this world, and the separation between them in the other world.

So prone is fallen man to sin, that if the enemy sows the tares, he may go his way, they will spring up, and do hurt.

Whereas, when good seed is sown, it must be tended, watered, and fenced.

The servants complained to their master; Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field?

No doubt he did; whatever is amiss in the church, we are sure it is not from Christ.

Though gross transgressors, and such as openly oppose the gospel, ought to be separated from the society of the faithful, yet no human skill can make an exact separation.

Verses 28-30:

The servants asked what could be done with these tares.

To uproot them would be to damage the entire crop.

“Root up ... the wheat with them:”

The implication seems to be that too much scathing of people's genuineness of faith may damage the saved before it exposes the lost.

"Let both grow together" indicates that there will always be some false professors among true Christian believers until the "time of harvest" or judgment.

Note that the tares are gathered, bound, and burned first, whereas the wheat is gathered into "my barn (heaven)."

Matthew 13:28 "He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?"

Those who oppose must not be cut off, but instructed, and that with meekness.

And though good and bad are together in this world, yet at the great day they shall be parted; then the righteous and the wicked shall be plainly known; here sometimes it is hard to distinguish between them.

Let us, knowing the terrors of the Lord, not do iniquity.

You see, there was recognition right off that the devil had been to the field and he has sown these evil ones.

Sometimes the person sitting on the pew beside you in church is not really a believer, but has been placed there by the devil to disrupt what is going on.

These believers, here, are asking the Lord, should we throw them out of the church?

Matthew 13:29 "But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."

All through the Bible, the wheat stands for the true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know in a church, if you begin to throw the enemy out, some of the true believers will be hurt and leave.

It is just best to leave them alone and feed them the un-watered down truth; and they will either repent and be saved, or they will leave on their own; because they cannot stand the truth.

Matthew 13:30 "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."

The Christians will be gathered and taken to the Master's barn (heaven).

You see, this Scripture occurs at the end of the Gentile age when God decides that it is time to reap the harvest of the Christians from the earth.

These reapers are the angels God sends to get the job done for Him.

Angels are ministering spirits directly under the command of God.

We will read more about this later in this lesson.

Verses 31-32:

(See Mark 4:30-34; Luke 13:18-19).

The “mustard seed is unusually small and yet grows to a great size.

The idea seems to be that the tiny beginning of the church will then eventually culminate into a great growth.

“Herbs” (Greek lachanon), are garden plants or vegetables.

However, such numerical growth will come to harbor the “birds” (evil ones).

The parable accordingly foreshadows the growth of the church into a world power.

However, outward growth is not always a true picture of spiritual depth.

Matthew 13:31-32 "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:"
“Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

“A tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches”:

Palestinian mustard plants are large shrubs, sometimes up to 15 feet high, certainly large enough for birds to lodge in.

This is undoubtedly a reference to several Old Testament passages, including (Ezek. 17:23; 31:6; Dan. 4:21), passages which prophesied the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom.

Have you ever seen a "on-fire-for-God Christian", who was as small as a grain of mustard seed?

When he gets saved, he cannot be quiet.

The first thing you know, he has led hundreds to God.

You see, we are all grafted in the tree of life (Jesus), when we get saved.

Just one true believer can add mightily to that tree.

He is the vine; we are the branches.

We do provide shelter for the lost of the world.

Verses 33-35:

“Kingdom of heaven” is the spiritual form of the kingdom in the church.

“Leaven” is a lump of old dough in a state of fermentation, which makes the bread dough rise.

It is virtually always used as a symbol of evil (Matt. 16:6-12; Mark 8:15; Gal 5:9).

“Three measures of meal”, a common baking quantity (Genesis 18:6), equivalent to one-and-a-half gallons.

(Greek saton, Hebrew seah).

The leaven is not just false profession of unsaved church members but false doctrine that they will attempt to bring into the church.

Matthew 13:33 "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven”:

Here the kingdom is pictured as yeast, multiplying quietly and permeating all that it contacts.

The lesson is the same as the parable of the mustard seed.

Some interpreters suggest that since leaven is nearly always a symbol of evil in Scripture, it must carry that connotation here as well.

They make the leaven some evil influence inside the kingdom.

But that twists Jesus actual words and violates the context, in which Jesus is repeatedly describing that kingdom itself as the pervading influence.

Matthew 13:34 "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:"

“Without a parable spake he not unto them”:

For the rest of the Galilean ministry all Jesus’ public teaching consisted only of parables.

Matthew 13:35 "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

“Spoke by the prophet”:

The “prophet” in this case was the psalmist (see Psalm 78:2).

You see again, that Jesus spoke in parables so the worldly people could not understand with their minds, and come to God with their hearts, but not with their minds.

These secrets, that Jesus was revealing, were things of the dispensation of grace, not the law, (see Matt. 13:15).

Matthew 13:36 "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."

You see, at this time the disciples had not received the Spirit (teacher), and they did not understand; because parables must be understood by the Spirit.

Matthew 13:37 "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;"

“He that soweth”:

The true sower of salvation seed is the Lord Himself.

He alone can give the power in the heart to transform.

He is the One who saves sinners, even through the preaching and witnessing of believers (Romans 10:14).

Matthew 13:38 "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked [one];"

Jesus is the Word.

Believers in the Lord Jesus have to grow in the midst of evil.

We must be tried, or else the Lord would not truly know if we belong to Him.

You see, Satan's crowd is all around us.

Matthew 13:39 "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

You see, the devil himself is headed for a burning hell, and he would like to see all of us go there with him.

He brings every temptation known to man to cause us to stumble and fall.

Sometimes, we are unaware who the enemy is.

Sometimes he lives in a physically beautiful girl, or a handsome young man.

We are nearing harvest time; the time when the trumpet will blow and the Christians will be carried away to God's barn (heaven).

Angels are ministering spirits.

We Christians have been called to bring in the harvest.

Matthew 13:40 "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."

"As therefore the tares are gathered":

As it is represented in the parable, that in the time of harvest, the tares shall be gathered out from the wheat first; and being bound in bundles, shall be burnt in the fire, prepared for that purpose,

So shall it be in the end of this world; hypocritical and heretical men, and all formal professors, shall be gathered out from among the saints, and the several churches, among whom they have been; and shall be together cast into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels, whose children they are.

Matthew 13:41 "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;"

"The Son of man shall send forth his angels":

Meaning himself, whose ministers the angels are; who wait upon him, and are at his beck and command; even the thousand thousands that minister unto him; these will be sent forth by his orders, into the whole parts of the world.

Matthew 13:42 "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

"And shall cast them into a furnace of fire":

“There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”:

What terrific strength of language, the "casting" or "flinging" expressive of indignation, abhorrence, contempt (compare Psalm 9:17; Dan. 12:2).

"A furnace of fire" denoting the fierceness of the torment: the "wailing", signifying the anguish this causes; while the "gnashing of teeth" is a graphic way of expressing the despair in which its being without remedy issues (see Matt 8:12).

This will be a time of trouble such as the world has never known before.

Just to know that we would be forever separated from Jesus would be bad enough, but to burn forever would be horrible.

Jesus is the Judge.

He decided which way we go.

Truly though, it is our decision to follow Him in truth, or not.

Matthew 13:43 "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

“Shine forth as the sun”:

Daniel 12:3.

Believers already shine in that they possess the Spirit of Christ and the glorious message of the gospel (5:16; 2 Cor. 4:3-7).

We will shine even more in the glory of Christ's kingdom and eternal heaven (Rom. 8:16-23; Phil. 3:20-21; Rev. 9:7-9).

It is beyond description what is waiting for the true believer, who stays faithful to the end.

It will be one eternal day with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

We will shine, because we will be in the presence of the Light (Jesus).

Here, Jesus just said one more time; don't turn away from God.

Let that still quiet voice bring you to the Lord.

Matthew Chapter 13 Continued Questions

1. What is the Kingdom of heaven likened unto?
2. What is the kingdom of heaven built for?
3. When the men slept, who planted?
4. Who does the wheat represent?
5. Who do the tares represent?
6. What did the servants ask the householder?
7. Are we to throw them out of the church?
8. Why?
9. What two things will happen to unbelievers, if you leave them alone?
10. Where is the Masters barn?
11. Who are the reapers?
12. Who are ministering spirits?
13. What did the grain of mustard seed grow to be?
14. Who is the Tree of Life?
15. What did the woman hide in the measure of meal?
16. How did Jesus reveal the secrets that had been kept from the foundation of the earth?
17. Why did the disciples not understand the parables?
18. Who sowed the good seed?
19. Who are the good seed?
20. Who are the tares?
22. What is the harvest?
23. Where will the evil wind up?

24. Who is the Judge?

25. Why will the righteous shine?