

# **THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT & TARES**

Part one—dated 04/08/2019

**Readings:** Matthew 13:24-30 and 13:36-40

## **The Setting of the Parable.**

The setting of the parable is the same as for the parable of the Sower and the Seed. Jesus is sitting in the boat and the multitude is standing on the seashore. The parable, however, is given to the multitude but the interpretation of the parable is given to the disciples in the house, privately by Jesus and not to the multitude on the seashore. The interpretation is given to the disciples in response to their question to Jesus about this parable.

## **The Moral/Lesson of the Parable.**

The central truth/lesson/moral of the parable is seen in the following:

The Kingdom of Heaven/God in its present state has mixture in it—mixture of good & evil. This condition will prevail unto the end of the age and coming of Christ. At that time, a great separation will take place—the separation of the wicked & righteous. The eternal destinies of both are settled for ever.

## **The Exposition of the Parable.**

This parable is only to be found in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom. Without doubt, the interpretation of the parable of the Sower & the Seed, and the parable of the Wheat & the Tares by Jesus Himself, provide guidelines for the interpretation. As in the first parable, the symbolic elements of the parable have to be interpreted to gain access to the full truth & significance of the whole parable. When Jesus says, “The Kingdom of heaven is **like...**”, He is saying that the Kingdom of heaven resembles, corresponds to or represents the things that make up the whole parable. The first parable emphasized the beginning of the Kingdom while this parable emphasizes the mixture in the Kingdom.

### **1. The SOWER**

There is no mistake as to who the sower is in this parable, even though in the 1<sup>st</sup> parable the sower was not specifically identified. The man sows seed in the field. The sower is the Son of Man as Verses 24 and 37 clearly show. In verse 27 He is spoken of as the householder or the owner of the field.

“Son of Man” is a Messianic name and refers to His humanity, His human nature (see Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 10:25 11:19;& 27 and 12:18). “Son of David” refers to His Messianic line as the Root and Offspring of David—David’s Son and yet David’s Lord—as His humanity and deity (Revelation 5:5; 22:16).

Likewise, “the man” in parables 2,3,5 and 6 undoubtedly points to the Son of Man Himself whom Stephen saw in His glorified state (Acts 7:56).

In the Old Testament times, God sowed Israel and Judah among the nations of the earth (Jeremiah 31:27). In the New Testament times, Jesus sows the church among the nations of the earth (Matt 16:18).

### **2. The Wheat Seed**

The Son of Man sowed good seed, called wheat in His field. The good seed are clearly defined as “the children of the kingdom”(vv24,38). The children of the kingdom are called “wheat”(vv25,29). Sowing time is always the beginning. Harvest time is the end. So this parable begins with sowing season and ends with harvest

season. It is note worthy to see that “the seed” in the first parable is “The Word of the Kingdom” whereas “the seed” in this second parable is “the children of the Kingdom”. In the 1<sup>st</sup> parable we **receive** the seed, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> parable we **become** the seed! The emphasis in the first parable is “*receiving the seed*” while in the second parable it is “*becoming the seed*” of the Kingdom. Believers cannot become the seed of the Kingdom until we receive the Word of the Kingdom!

### **3. The Field**

The sower sowed good seed in his field. A comparison of verse 24 and 38 show that it is “His Field”, and the field is the world. Psalm 24:1 tells us that the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. The Son of Man really owns the field. It is His field, it is His world.

### **4. The Sleeping Watchman**

“While men slept”, an enemy came in and sowed other seed. It is night time. Although Jesus does not specifically interpret this part of the parable, the context of Scripture as well as cultural custom helps us to understand the danger of the night time. In Bible times, the owner of the field sometimes had men employed as watchmen over his field, so that no enemy could come by night to corrupt the field by sowing other or evil seed. In this case, the watchmen slept and while they slept the enemy came and did his evil work. The field was not left only to good seed.

While sleep is healthy thing, there are Scriptures to indicate the sleep of laziness, indifference, un-watchfulness from which God calls us to awake as the following references show:

“Watchman, what of the night? ”(Isaiah 21:11-12).

Peter, James and John fell asleep at the mount of transfiguration and Jesus had to wake them in order to see Moses and Elijah and His glory (Luke 9:28-36).

Peter, James and John fell asleep in the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus had to awaken them again (Luke 22:39-46).

Apostle Paul says “It is high time to awake out of sleep...”(Romans 13:11-12). Believers are not to sleep as others do in the night time.(1-Thess 5:1-10). The wise and the foolish virgins all slumbered and slept and had to be awakened at the midnight hour (Matt25:1-13).

Church history shows that the ministers of the gospel over the centuries fell into a state of spiritual lethargy, slumber, indifference, prayerlessness and lack of watchfulness. As a result, the enemy of Christ came and sowed evil seed in “His field”. The ministries and leaders in the church are to be God’s watchman.

### **5. The Enemy Sower**

There is no mistake about the enemy here. The enemy of Christ and the Church is none other than the devil. The devil came and sowed evil seed among the good seed (vv25,28,39). The devil is Christ’s enemy. The devil was at work in parable one, catching away the seed of the Word of the Kingdom out of people’s heart. The same devil is at work in parable two, but this time sowing evil seed among the good seed.

### **6. The Tares Seed.**

The devil sowed tares among the wheat; evil seed among the good seed. He did not try here to root up the wheat seed. He tried to mix the seed with evil seed. The tares as the evil seed are defined by Jesus as “the children of wicked one“(vv25,26,27,30 with 38,40). Various translations say “darnel” or “weed” or “thistles” or simply “black wheat”. Strongs Concordance(SC2215) says “of uncertain origin; the darnel or false grain and is translated as tares. The Jews referred to tares as “bastard wheat” or “degenerate wheat”. In any case it was a counterfeit or illegitimate kind of wheat. The farmer could hardly distinguish one from the other in its early growing stages. The

wheat and the tares looked somewhat alike in the early growth stage. They are indistinguishable at their beginning.

**(a) Nature of wheat**

Wheat is a wholesome grain. When crushed to flour it is used for bread and for other kinds of food. In its growing stage, it needs chaff to protect it. It has a milk like substance in its early formation. Wheat ripens by absorbing light. Once it comes out of the milk stage, and becomes mature, wheat bows its full head and is then ready for reaping. It is called “golden grain”. Satan wanted to sift Peter as wheat but Jesus prayed for him that his faith fail not (Luke 22:31).

**(b) Nature of Tares**

Tares, as a degenerate kind of wheat is a black seed. It is really a poisonous grain. If eaten, it is bitter and causes dizziness to the eater. Within it is this black poison. When tares are fully ripe, they stand stiffly erect in contrast to the bowing heads of the wheat. Only when tares and wheat are fully ripe, their inner nature and character is seen and known. Tares are useless for food and only fit for burning.

The two seed lines are seen in Genesis 3:15—the seed of woman and the seed of the serpent. The godly line of faith was the good seed, the ungodly line of unbelief was the evil seed. John the Baptist and Jesus Himself spoke of the tares as “the generation of vipers”(Matt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33). The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribe and the religious hypocrites of Christ’s time. The false cults in Christendom are also tares; counterfeit Christians are wolves in sheep’s clothing—like angels of light but apostate in nature and falling stars(2 Co 11:13-15; Matt 7:15; Acts 20:28-29).Jude’s Epistle has been called “The Acts of the Apostates” and certainly illustrates the religious nature of tares. (see Revelation 2:13)

In the light of today’s Word, let us check out ourselves, where we stand in the kingdom of God—are we living & growing like wheat or there is a touch/portion of tares as well in us? Let us ponder on the question as we prepare for the Holy Communion in few minutes.