

Sunday August 28th, 2005

Matthew Chapter 13 Part 3
The Wheat and Tares

1). Last week we had studied the parable of the sower and we had learned that.

- a). The Sower was the Son of Man – the Lord Jesus Christ
- b). That which was sown was in fact individual Christians
- c). And they were sown out into the world for the purpose of producing fruit in relation to the Kingdom of the Heavens that had been taken from Israel and is now being offered to the Church.

2). We also learned that that the enemy of our souls does everything possible to prevent our producing fruit. And this we saw in three instances

- a). Those sown by the wayside who do not understand the word of the kingdom
- b). Those sown in rocky places who hear and accept the word of the kingdom but don't have the foundation they need to weather the tribulation and persecution that comes.
- c). Those sown among the thorns who hear and receive the word but the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of this life choke the word so that they remain unfruitful.

3). Then there is the last sowing – those sown in good ground

a). Mt 13:23 *"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

b). Despite Satan's best efforts there are those who hear the word of the kingdom, understand it, overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, and begin producing fruit after various amounts. And these various amounts would fit entirely with the parable of the pounds/minas - Lu 19:16 *"Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'* 17 *"And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'* 18 *"And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'* 19 *"Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'*

4). As we said last week this is not the conclusion of the matter. Rather in the next parable, that of the Wheat and Tares, we see the enemy's attack against those who are producing fruit in order to bring a stop to the process.

a). Let us read the parable and the Lord's explanation.

5). Mt 13:24 ¶ *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who 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 grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"*

Mt 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

6). Now let's make sure we understand exactly what we are talking about in this parable.

a). Jesus begins with the phrase – '*The kingdom of heaven is like*' – and grammatically this phrase would be better understood as '*the kingdom of heaven has become like...*' (Greek grammar)

b). The kingdom of heaven is a realm and specifically the realm that has to do with rulership over the earth

i/ Da 4:26..... *the heavens do rule.*

c). Not only that but we know that this heavenly realm is occupied at present by Satan and his fallen angels - Eph 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*

d). And as such we would realize that the realm itself does not change. We are looking forward to a change of occupancy within the realm when Christ and His coheirs take control, but the realm itself remains the same.

e). When Jesus, John and the twelve brought the message - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Has drawn near) – clearly the realm itself had not come any closer, nor could it, but the prospect of Israel moving into and occupying that realm based on national repentance was at hand

f). We can see then that the realm itself does not change. Only certain things about the kingdom can change. So when Jesus states at the beginning of the parable of the wheat and tares, that the ‘kingdom of heaven has become like’ He is talking about something other than the kingdom of itself.

g). And fortunately both the beginning and ending of the parabolic sequence in Matthew 13 leave us in no doubt exactly what He is referring to.

I/ Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

ii/ Mt 13:52 *Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."*

h). It is not the realm of the kingdom of the heavens that has become like, this would be impossible. Rather it is the proclamation and offer of the kingdom of the heavens (The word of the kingdom), referred to at the beginning and end of these parables, which has become like.

i). And it has become like in relation to the fourth group from the parable of the Sower, those who are producing fruit.

7). Those producing fruit in the parable of the Sower are those referred to in the parable of the wheat and tares as the ‘sons of the kingdom’. Only sons can rule in the kingdom of God and only those producing fruit will have a part in that kingdom

a). Ro 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

b). Eph 1:5 *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will*, (Note all Christians are not automatically sons)

8). In amongst the wheat, the ‘sons of the kingdom’ have been sown the tares, ‘the sons of the wicked one’, sown into the same field by the devil.

a). Tares = Greek *zizanon* = false wheat

In the natural the tares as they grow look like wheat but are not wheat and would be distinguished from the real thing by their lack of grain.

b). As with the natural, so with the spiritual. Those sown amongst the sons of the kingdom look like them, but are not them, because they produce no fruit. And note also that they appear once a crop is produced - Mt 13:26 *"But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.*

c). Their resemblance to wheat, their being sown amongst the wheat and their gathering together at the same time as the wheat, at the time of harvest makes it abundantly clear that the tares are Christians and cannot be the lost as some would teach,

i/ Re 1:12 *Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. –It is the complete church, all Christians - Ro 14:10b ... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. – Who appear together in the presence of Christ as Judge.*

ii/ Re 20:11 ¶ *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, - All the lost from all time appear at the Great White Throne some 1000 years after that taking place in Revelation 1:12-13*

9). The question to ask is how can those who are Christians be designated as the ‘sons of the wicked one’.

a). Really the answer is quite simple – it is their actions that align them with the wicked one rather than with God. They are his sons by association.

b). We can see this clearly in the scribes and Pharisees at Christ’s first coming - Joh 8:43 *"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the*

beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. – Let us remember that these were redeemed people and yet their actions had to do with the desires of Satan rather than the desires of God. Also note - Mt 12:32 *"Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*(the same group of people addressed here – this age and the age to come)

I/ Mt 16:23 *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."* – Note the Lord says this to Peter, not Satan (Explain)

c). So what can we know from our examples here and from the evidence of the parable of the Sower? That there are Christians who through their actions attempt to prevent other Christians from producing fruit thereby aligning them with the desire of the wicked one. In this sense they are his sons and in this sense he has sown them.

d). Their action in respect of where we are now in the dispensation is no more premeditated than Peter's, but the consequence is the same. (Explain)

10). So who are the tares? Again, we need only go back to Christ's first coming where this same message of the kingdom was being proclaimed and both the message and the messenger were being attacked resulting in stopping fruit production in the nation of Israel.

a). From our scripture in John chapter 8, we see the religious leaders in view and this would be consistent with what Jesus says about them elsewhere - Mt 23:13 ¶ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men (in the presence of men); for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*

b). Bringing this over into this dispensation we would have to see that, that which was true 2000 years ago in relation to the offer of the kingdom, is also true today – It is Christian religious leaders who would be represented by the tares. Obstructing, contradicting and rejecting the proclamation and offer of the kingdom of the heavens. To the extent that in some cases this message is classified as cultic and even satanic.

c). Not only that, but those who have come under their influence would also be part of the problem - Mt 23:15 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and*

when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell(Gehenna) as yourselves.

11). Again, we can clearly understand why it is so important for us all to study so that scripture can interpret itself. Any lack of diligence in this area could put us at serious risk. Having the foundations firmly cemented and grasping the big picture of scripture so as to be steadfast in the faith - 1Pe 5:9 *Resist him, steadfast in the faith,* is not an option, but an absolute necessity. And getting to the place of being steadfast in the faith is worth any and every sacrifice. I would also caution you to be careful who you listen to what you watch and what you read – just because it is ‘Christian’ doesn’t make it of value.

a). The line in this parable which is troubling - Mt 13:25 *"but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat*

b). I am reminded of the night of Jesus’ betrayal - Mt 26:40 *Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

c). Pr 20:13 ¶ *Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread.*

d). Ps 13:3 *Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death;*

e). 1Th 5:6 ¶ *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

12). And what should be our response to the tares? Exactly that of scripture, let them alone. At the time of harvest, the end of the age, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Lord Himself through the ministry of angels will make the necessary separation - 1Co 3:11 ¶ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

a). And let us please remember that this separation is in respect of the Millennial Kingdom, NOT eternity – note v15 above

b). And let us note the two distinct outcomes – Suffering loss – cast into the furnace of fire - Mt 13:41 *"The Son of Man will send out His angels,*

and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mt 7:21 ¶ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Mt 15:13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

14 "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

Joh 15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

c). But for those who receive a reward - *Mt 13:43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

2Ti 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

1Pe 1:9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

13). Next week we shall look at the work of the enemy that has brought about the present condition of the Church.