

The Parables of Jesus

Lesson 15

Parable of the Wheat and Tares – Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

The wheat and tares parable demonstrates that Jesus Christ will purify His Body of believers at His second coming. These Last Judgment parables are so extremely important that Jesus issues this command to all of His disciples, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.” He has put us all on alert...listening is one thing but understanding is the key.

Setting for the Parable

This parable was told to a large crowd on the beach from inside a fishing boat. The wheat and tares parable speaks of the last judgment of the Kingdom of God...more specifically...the Church age. Like some other parables, Jesus made it easy for us to understand because He explained to His twelve disciples what each of the parable’s elements represented.

Telling of the Parable

Jesus tells of a farmer who planted good seed in his field. The soil was good and the field was prepared well. The farmer and his workers worked long and hard to ensure a strong crop. But secretly during the night, the farmer’s enemy sowed weed seeds throughout the field.

The weeds began to grow along with the plants. When they were big enough they were noticed by the workers and they were shocked to find that the field of wheat was full of tares. The farmer was angry and immediately knew his enemy had sown weeds among the good seed.

The workers asked the farmer if they should uproot the weeds. The farmer declined because that would ruin the wheat. The farmer told them to sort the wheat and tares at harvest. The wheat would then go into the barn and the tares would be bundled and burned.

Meaning of the Parable

The wheat and tares parable is a classic farming parable encompassing the entire seasonal growing cycle...from preparation of the farm ground to the harvesting of the grain. Jesus explained the parable to his disciples giving us the true meaning of the wheat and tares.

Parable Symbolism...

The Farmer – Jesus

The Field – The World

The Good Seed – Christians

The Tares – The Unsaved

The Enemy – Satan

The Harvest – The End of the Church Age

During the Church age Jesus saves sinners. He plants the good seed in the world. As mentioned, the good seed represents His true disciples. Of course, Satan has his bad seed sown throughout the world as well...unfortunately even inside the church.

Jesus made it clear that final judgment is His. His wrath will be poured out on those who are not saved. Believers will be sorted from unbelievers and the unsaved will be brought before the Great White Throne for final sentencing. He will sentence all nonbelievers to hell for all eternity.

After this final purging, the Kingdom of God will be pure. This is the ultimate focus of this parable. As verse 43 says, "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The wheat and tares parable makes a grand statement. At the second coming of Christ, there will be a final judgment...a reckoning for all people of all time. All those who've asked "Where is God's justice?" will now finally see the response from God. Justice is coming and coming soon.

The Christian's judgment will have some tense moments and we'll discover that we've lost many rewards because of our lack of faithfulness and obedience to Him. Jesus will review the good works we were supposed to do and we will be rewarded and judged according to what we actually did.

In the end, joy will prevail and it will be a glorious time. He will welcome each and every one of us to heaven.

Scripture is clear that we will all stand before the glorified, exalted Jesus. The Bible also gives us clear direction as to how we can be sure to hear Him say, "Well done good and faithful servant."

Get This!

Jesus' first appearance 2000 years ago found Him bringing salvation with Him (John 3:17). The wheat and tares parable informs us that His second coming is bringing judgment. All things will be revealed and everyone...saved and lost...will stand before Him. The unsaved will be at the Great White Throne and the saved will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The condemned will be sent to hell and the saved will enter the peaceful rest and eternal joy of the Lord.

I used to wonder even as a Christian, how it was that someone could possibly make God their number one priority in life and be totally sold out to Him. As I've shared many times, salvation is not the end but the beginning. Once I really began to understand what Jesus had done for me I discovered the answer to that question. An intimate relationship developed between me and Him through the power of the Holy Spirit. Now more than ever, my desire is to please Him...to keep Him the number one priority in my life...always.