

Jesus Teaches God's Judgments

Key Verse: *"After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."*
—*Revelation 19:1,2*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:24-30,
36-43

OUR LESSON PASSAGE

outlines Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares, together with his explanation. Jesus said that the "good seed" of the parable are "the children of the kingdom," and "the tares are the children of the wicked one." (Matt. 13:38) Tares are imitation wheat, so the contrast in the parable is not between believers and unbelievers, but between true believers and those who profess to believe, but whose viewpoints and conduct are not the true Christian's way of life.

"The Son of man" (vs. 37) sowed the 'good seed' of the parable; reminding us that it was Jesus who, through his teaching and the Holy Spirit, established the Early Church. The twelve apostles and those who believed on him through their word were the original 'children of the kingdom.' But after the death of

the apostles there came a great falling away from the true Gospel of the kingdom, and in due course a counterfeit kingdom was established through the union of the apostate church and the kings of the earth. This false kingdom came to be known as Christendom.

The prophetic outline of the parable embraces the entire Gospel, or Christian, Age, and it is at the end of the age that the separation between the “wheat” and the “tares” takes place. (vs. 30) The Son of man sends “his angels” (vs. 41) to bring about this separation. The word ‘angel’ here used is a translation of a Greek word that means messenger. They could be spiritual, or invisible, messengers or they could be human, or visible, messengers. The scope of work accomplished in the parable might seem to indicate that both are involved.

The ‘tares’ are bundled and cast into a great “furnace of fire” to be destroyed. (vs. 42) We think this ‘furnace’ is symbolic of the great “time of trouble” (Dan. 12:1), which comes upon the world at this end of the Gospel Age, and destroys all of its false and selfish institutions in preparation for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ.

The ‘wheat,’ the children of the kingdom, ultimately “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (vs. 43) This indicates that in the kingdom, following their resurrection from the dead, they will be part of that wonderful “Sun of righteousness” which will arise “with healing in his wings.”—Mal. 4:2

Our Key Verse follows a rather detailed symbolic account of the development, reign, and destruction of that false system which claimed to be Christ’s kingdom, but was not. The ‘whore’ of the passage is a reference to the false church that united illicitly with the civil governments of earth, and in this way gained power to foster her unscriptural viewpoints, and practices. Under this system true Christians were severely persecuted, but this comes to an end with the establishment in the earth of that “holy city” depicted in Revelation, chapter twenty-one. ■