

Parables of God's Just Kingdom

Key Verse: *"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."*
—Matthew 13:30

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:24-33

Indeed, Jesus has "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (II Tim. 1:10) The "field is the world," Jesus also says in verse 38. Here the word translated "world" is from the Greek word *kosmos*, and means "an orderly arrangement." Thus, the field in this parable refers to the present world order, including its imperfect human organizations.

The "tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil." (vss. 38,39) Here the word "tares" signifies false grain. As a class, those

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parable of the wheat and the tares, recorded in verses 24-30 of our lesson, his disciples asked him to explain it. (vs. 36) From Jesus' explanation we learn that he was not talking about literal seeds, a literal field, nor a literal burning of tares. Rather, each of these things in the parable were given to teach important lessons symbolizing something else.

Jesus explained: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man," and "the good seed are the children of the kingdom," the truly consecrated. (vss. 37,38)

who may profess Christian belief, attend church services occasionally or even regularly, and who call Jesus Lord but do not follow his example of character, are pictured by the tares. (Luke 6:46) The spirit of the tares is predominantly toward outward show and pride, and sectarian greatness. By contrast, the spirit of the wheat is individual obedience to God, and character likeness to Jesus.

The *King James* translation of a portion of Matthew 13:39 reads: “The harvest is the end of the world.” Here the word “end” is defined by *Strong’s Dictionary* as “entire completion” or “consummation,” and “world” denotes “an age.” Thus, the expression “end of the world” in Jesus explanation of the parable refers to the closing portion of the present Gospel Age, when man-made organizations and arrangements which are not in harmony with God’s plans and principles will be gathered together and subsequently removed. (Heb. 12:26,27) From other promises in the Bible, we know that the literal planet Earth “abideth for ever.”—Eccles. 1:4

Our Key Verse states that in the “time of harvest,” near the end of the Gospel Age, the tares would be gathered “in bundles.” This bundling work has been going on in various ways, such as the promotion of Christian unification by allegiance to man-made doctrines, creeds and organizations at the expense of personal responsibility and Bible study. By contrast, true unity is based upon individual searching, studying and striving to follow the doctrines and principles given in the Bible. (Eph. 4:13-16) Only as each consecrated follower of Christ strives to understand and personally apply the teachings which are found in the Scriptures can true Christian unity be found.

The destruction of the tares in the parable does not refer to people, but rather to the removal of the delusions of false doctrines and organizations, in preparation for God’s kingdom. (II Pet. 3:10-13) “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”—Matt. 13:43 ■