

Tares among the Wheat

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 13:24-30,36-43

Then, “while men slept,” an enemy sows tares, or imitation wheat, in the same field. The result of this is that the tares threaten to choke out the wheat. The servants of the householder who sowed the good seed suggest that the tares be uprooted and destroyed, but the householder does not permit this, explaining that doing so might also destroy the wheat. He orders that both the wheat and

THE PARABLE OF THE wheat and the tares is the subject of today’s lesson. In it, even as in the parable of the sower, there is a sowing of seed. However, in the parable of the sower the seed is explained to be “the word of the kingdom,” whereas in the parable of the wheat and the tares the seed is said to represent “the children of the kingdom.” (Matt. 13:19,38) These come into being as seed is sown in the “field.” Once sprouted, the “children of the kingdom” are represented as “good seed” of wheat.—vss. 24,37

In the wheat and tares parable there are two sowings. First, the wheat, or good seed, is sown.

the tares be permitted to grow together until the harvest, and that then the tares should be gathered into bundles to be burned, while the wheat is to be gathered into his barn. —vss. 24-30

Jesus' explanation of this parable begins with verses 37 and 38, in which he explains that "the field is the world," and that the one who sows the good seed is "the Son of Man." Jesus further states that "the tares are the children of the wicked one," and that "the enemy that sowed them is the devil." The application of the parable is worldwide, and embraces the entire Christian age, with a sowing by Jesus at the beginning of the age, and a harvest at the end of the age. It does not represent the work of the Lord's people as sowers of seed throughout the age, as does the parable of the sower.

The sowing of the good seed by the Son of man depicts the work of Jesus beginning with the selection of his apostles and other faithful disciples who constituted the nucleus of the Early Church. These were the first of the "children of the kingdom." Throughout the age, additional "good seed" have sprouted to become part of this kingdom class of wheat. All of these have been attracted to Jesus by the "gospel of the kingdom" which he preached. (Matt. 4:23; 9:35) The faithful members of this "wheat" class will "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." —Matt. 13:43

Concerning the tares, or imitation wheat, the parable states, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [Greek: age]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire." (Matt. 13:40-42) The tares represent the false, "imitation" church systems, which the Lord will destroy just prior to establishing his kingdom of righteousness upon the earth. The people, however, will be saved and given the opportunity to learn the true Gospel message and "know the LORD."—Jer. 31:31-34 ■