

The Wheat in God's Barn

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In one of a number of parables using agrarian metaphors, Jesus Christ described Satan's actions to undermine Almighty God's plan of restoring all sinners to Himself. In the parable of Matthew 13:24-30, wheat represents those who seek to follow God's will, while tares represent those who trust in Satan's value system. Before examining this parable more closely, it is important to understand certain characteristics of tares versus wheat. Tares are also known as darnel, darnel ryegrass, or cockle which is a species of injurious weed closely resembling wheat. Anciently, darnel could unintentionally be sown with wheat seed. However, with modern machinery darnel seeds can be efficiently separated from seed wheat. As darnel grows, it bears close resemblance to wheat until the ear appears. From this stage, darnel grows black in color while wheat appears brown as it ripens.

The French word for darnel is "ivraie" (from the Latin word "ebriacus"; intoxicated) which describes the drunken nausea experienced from eating darnel if it is infected by an endophytic fungus that can be fatal. In contrast, wheat produces food for man and beast, and is the staple of most diets around the world. Therefore, wheat helps to sustain good health and life, while darnel is not only bitter to the taste, but it can also lead to sickness and death.

With these points in mind, we can examine Christ's parable involving the wheat and tares.

Another parable he put forth to them, saying: "**The kingdom of heaven** is like a man who sowed good seed in his field." (Mt. 13:24; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; emphasis added).

Verse 24 is showing that activities in the kingdom of heaven, which is a spiritual realm, can be compared to activities in the physical realm; such as a farmer sowing seed. Therefore, this parable is first and foremost describing actions that have taken place, and/or are continuing to take place in the spirit realm. For this reason, it is important to ask what each physical aspect represents in the spirit realm, beginning with the man who is sowing "good" seed. As Christ said, there is only One who is good, in the ultimate sense of goodness. Consequently, the one sowing good seed would refer to Almighty God and/or whoever represents Him.

Now behold, one came and said to him (Christ), "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" ¹⁷So he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? **No one is good but One, that is, God** (Almighty). But if you want to enter life (everlasting), keep the commandments (Mt. 19:16-17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Before Jesus Christ became flesh and blood, God the Father gave him the responsibility of creating all things according to the Father's predetermined plan.

He (spirit-being now known as Christ) was in the beginning with God (the Father). ³All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made (Jn. 1:2-3; cf. Prov. 8:22-36; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Yet for us there is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things (in the ultimate sense), and we for Him; and one **Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things** (in creation), and through whom we live (1Cor. 8:6; cf. Heb. 1:2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

This creative process began in the spirit realm.

For by him (Christ) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible... (Col. 1:16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The result of Christ planting good seed in the spirit realm is described in the following scripture,

...the morning stars sang together, and **all the sons of God shouted for joy** (Job 38:7b; emphasis added).

In this group are all the angels of God, regardless of their differing responsibilities, including Lucifer prior to his rebellion. He is one of the "morning stars" described as being in close proximity to the throne of God (Eze. 28: 12-15). Therefore, Matthew 13:24 is revealing a period of time in the distant past when only "good seed" was planted, and in the process of growing to maturity. However, at some point during this peaceful period, a decision was made to introduce poisonous weeds with the potential of ruining the entire "field" of grain.

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way (Mt. 13:25).

It was by the deliberate action of one spirit-being that potentially poisonous seeds were given the opportunity to grow along with the good seed. As physical wheat and tares change color over time, so the "enemy's" subterfuge eventually became apparent.

But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷So 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?" (Mt. 13:26-27)

There is a possibility that the "spiritual tares" of the enemy comprise at least a third of the entire crop.

His (Satan's; cf. vs. 9) tail (*lies*; cf. Isa. 9:15; Jn. 8:44) drew **a third of the stars of heaven** (angels; cf. Rev. 1:20) and threw them to the earth... (Rev. 12:4a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

These "spiritual tares", that were introduced by Satan, are described elsewhere as continuing to have an effect on the "spiritual wheat crop".



...THE MORNING STARS SANG TOGETHER,
AND **ALL THE SONS OF GOD SHOUTED**
FOR JOY.

Job 38:7b; emphasis added

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, **who long ago were marked out** (by Satan) for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace (mercy and forgiveness) of our God into licentiousness (license to disobey God's word) and deny the only Lord (Almighty) and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

At this point it is important to note that scripture often uses the word "man" or "men" to describe angels (Gen. 18:2-33; 19:1-24; Jos. 5:13-15). Therefore, the word "men" in Jude 4 refers to angels as the next verse confirms.

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day (Jude 6).

Although these fallen angels are awaiting a future judgment, that will occur at the end of Christ's millennial rule on earth, they are still

intermingled with the good wheat crop as the next verses confirm.

He (Christ) said to them, "An enemy has done this." The servants said to him, "Do you want us then to go and gather them up?" ²⁹But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let 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. 13:28-30; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This scenario may not make sense at first glance. In other words, why not remove the potentially poisonous plants? There are a number of reasons Christ delayed any immediate action against the "spiritual tares". One of these is mentioned in the following scripture,

And lest I (Paul) should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given me, **a messenger of Satan to buffet (beat) me, lest I be exalted (become too proud) above measure** (2Cor. 12:7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So Paul recognized that one of Satan's messengers was being used to keep him from becoming too proud regarding the many revelations that were given to him through Christ. However, this is a two-way street because God's "spiritual wheat" can be used to educate the fallen angels, even if it doesn't change their attitudes immediately.

And to make all people see what is the stewardship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things; ¹⁰to the intent that now **the manifold wisdom of God might be**

made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Eph. 3:9-10; cf. 6:12; emphasis added).

One of the reasons for the church making God's truth known to the fallen angels is so they are without excuse in the future judgment that will occur at the end of Christ's millennial rule on earth (Rev. 20:4-6). In other words, by their proper conduct, God's true servants act as witnesses against the rebellious actions of Satan and his followers. Therefore, when the fallen angels are faced with their judgment, the examples of God's faithful servants will be brought to their attention. This will be a time of fiery trial for the fallen angels, and it is described using figurative language in Matthew 13:30b. God's ultimate goal is that no one perish forever (2Pet. 3:9b), but that does not mean they will not experience the anguish of guilt for the harm they have caused to themselves and others. This will be a painful time that will hopefully lead all sinners to repentance, both fallen angels and sinful human beings.

But the sons of the kingdom (reference to any rebellious individual or nation; cf. Mt. 13:38; 21:43) will be cast out into outer darkness (for the purpose of leading them to repentance). There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (deep regret and remorse) (Mt. 8:12; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Satan himself is singled out as being part of those who are going to deeply regret their sinful actions.

But when the king came in to see the (wedding) guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹²So he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the servants, "**Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness;**

there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 22:11-13; cf. Rev. 20:1-3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Satan was not wearing the appropriate wedding garment because the correct clothing for marriage to Jesus Christ represents obedience to the law and commandments of Almighty God, which Satan currently rejects.



THE ENEMY WHO SOWED THEM (THE TARES) IS THE DEVIL...

Matthew 13:39a; Ed. note in parenthesis

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) has come, and his wife has made herself ready. ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in **fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is (represents) the righteous acts of the saints** (Rev. 19:7-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So the phrase "righteous acts" refers to an active and willing obedience of God's law and commandments.

Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness... (Ps. 132:9a).

For **all Your commandments are righteousness** (Ps. 119:172b; emphasis added).

The righteousness of Your testimony is everlasting... (Ps. 119:144a).

The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever (Ps. 119:160; cf. Mt. 4:4; 5:17-19).

Shortly after giving the parable of the wheat and tares, Christ explained its meaning to his disciples,

He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man" (Mt. 13:37).

This confirms that Christ is the one responsible for creating all things under delegation from his heavenly Father. Next, Christ confirms that both humans and angels are considered part of this world.

The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one (Mt. 13:38).

The "wicked one" is then clearly identified,

The enemy who sowed them (the tares) is the devil... (Mt. 13:39a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Next, Christ explained that the harvest associated with judgment will not occur until the end of his millennial reign on earth,

... the harvest is the end of the age (Mt. 13:39b; cf. Rev. 20:4-6).

Then Christ stated that loyal and obedient angels will be involved with organizing this end time period of judgment,

... and the reapers are the angels (Mt. 13:39c).

However, the apostle Paul pointed out that repentant and obedient Christians will be actively judging rebellious angels who are resurrected at the end of Christ's millennial rule.

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (1Cor. 6:2a).

Do you not know that we shall judge angels? (1Cor. 6:3a).

Christ then went on to describe fiery trials associated with the process of leading sinners to repentance during the period of the second resurrection. This is symbolic language which has unfortunately been interpreted literally by many people.

Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age (Mt. 13:40).

Christ confirmed that fiery trials are often required to wake sinners up to the serious consequences of their rebellious attitudes and actions.

I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined in the fire**, that you may be rich; and white garments (symbolic of obedience to God's law and commandments), that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness (symbolic of sinful conduct; cf. Gen. 3:6-7) may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see (God's truth correctly) (Rev. 3:18; cf. Jas. 1:2-4; Phil. 3:8; 1Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-15; Heb. 12:11; 1Cor. 11:32; Job 5:17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Upon repentance of sin, every sinner's former way of living will be extinguished forever, hence the comparison of being destroyed in fire. Nothing that is lawless will remain because it would create disharmony within the family of God.

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 (symbolic of extreme trials). There

will be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 13:41; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

After this fiery trial is completed, and every form of rebellion against God's will is resolved, Jesus Christ will have completed his commission to restore all sinners in their relationship with Almighty God.



DO YOU KNOW THAT WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS?

1 Corinthians 6:3a

Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (Mt. 13:43).

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming.²⁴ Then comes the end (inclusive of the second resurrection), when he (Christ) delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power (that is contrary to God's will).²⁵ For he (Christ) must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet (1Cor. 15:22-25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For "*He (Almighty God) has put all things under his (Christ's) feet.*" But when He says, "all things are put under him (Christ)," it is evident (obvious) that He who put all things under him (Christ) is excepted.²⁸ Now **when all things are made subject to Him (Almighty God), then the Son himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under him**, that God may be all in all (one harmonious family) (1Cor. 15:27-28; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

At this point in Almighty God's plan of restoring all sinners to Himself, the physical creation will no longer be required because its purpose of

dealing with sin will have been fulfilled through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and the repentance of all sinners.

Do not think that I (Christ) came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸For assuredly, I say to you, till (***the first**; cf. Rev. 21:1) heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Mt. 5:17-18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And I (John) saw a new heaven and a new earth, ***for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away**. Also there was no more sea (Rev. 21:1; Ed. notes in parenthesis; cf. **2Pet. 3:10-13**).



AND I (JOHN SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, ***FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY**. ALSO THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.

Revelation 21:1; Ed. notes in parenthesis; cf. II Peter 3:10-13

In conclusion, Christ's parable about the wheat and tares is a summary account of Almighty God's plan to restore all sinners to Himself. This plan spans a great period of time from the creation of all things, through the spirit being now known as Jesus Christ, to the second resurrection which includes the final judgment of all sinners. The brilliance of Almighty God's "plan of salvation" is that He allows everyone to retain their freedom to make choices, even if the wrong choices harm themselves and others. The goal is that no one ultimately perishes because every sinner will eventually see the consequences of their past actions when they lived contrary to God's law and commandments (Rom. 11:1-36; 2Pet. 3:9; cf. Isa. 2:2-4).

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