

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Stories Jesus Told

No 3

The Wheat and the Weeds.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:24-30 & 37-43.

The parables in Matthew 13 are kingdom parables. (Kingdom=king+dom, or "kingdom"). The kingdom of God is the sphere in all ages where the King is acknowledged. *'Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures through all generations.'* Psalm 145:13. The kingdom of God transcends time. Somewhere in eternity God's chief angel rebelled and the archangel became the arch-enemy of God seeking to destroy Him and set his own kingdom in the place of God's. Ezekiel 28:11-19 appears to point to this conflict, a conflict which is still in progress today. You cannot understand what is happening in the world today if you do not appreciate this cosmic struggle. Jesus came to establish God's beachhead against Satan's onslaught, which was to be accomplished not through physical conflict, but physical suffering Luke 22:18.

There are several aspects to the kingdom of God. John's announcement pointed to Jesus, God's chosen One, the King. Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, *"The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."* Luke 17:20&21. The NASB translates it better: 'The kingdom of God is in your midst' because the King was present there with them, in their midst. Today He is in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. One day, however the kingdom of God will be revealed in glory and the King will rule the earth in righteousness. Read thoughtfully Luke 17:20-37. Until then, *'We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.'* 1 John 5:19. However, God has not surrendered sovereignty and is on track to achieve His purposes. It is to this in-between state, between His rejection and His coming in His glory that Jesus directed this parable. It is for our time.

This Parable is About the Kingdom of

Heaven. The kingdom of heaven is not quite the same as the kingdom of God, but is similar.

The kingdom of heaven is a phrase used only by Matthew who wrote his gospel for those Jewish readers who had accepted the King whom their leaders had rejected. It presents Jesus as the King in His kingdom.

The phrase if correctly translated would read 'the kingdom of the heavens (plural). The king is in the heavens, but we, His subjects, are on earth doing His will.

Jesus Interpreted the Parable. Be careful to apply the parable, just as he did.

The sower is Jesus Himself v37, crucified, risen and ascended into the

heavens. These things happened whilst He was absent from his field. The sower sleeping has only this meaning, do not push it too far, because Jesus did not give it another meaning. God does not asleep. Remember:

He will not let your foot slip- he who watches over you will not slumber.
Psalm 121:3

The field is this world, the kosmos v38.

Be careful not to equate the world with the church, even though the church is imperfect, sometimes ungodly. The field here is this world.

The seed are His subjects v38, Jesus planted first His disciples then through their work, His people, His church, in the world - people, Spirit born and living into Him.

The enemy is the devil, the enemy of God from eternity v39. It has been this way since before time began. In the garden of Eden, everything was perfect until "that old serpent" came and introduced the poison of sin into God's creation. He is still doing this and more today.

The weeds, the darnel are the children of the devil v38. These are Satan's people, world religions, sects, secular humanists, new age people, just to name a few. The weeds referred to here, called tares or darnel in the other translations are a lookalike for true wheat which grow in that area. But more than that, 'the seeds are poisonous,' says Vine, 'to man and herbivorous animals, producing sleepiness, nausea, convulsions and even death.' Francis Dixon says of it, 'When the blossom appears on the darnel it contains a peculiar poison which is blown over the wheat and threatens to destroy its fruitage.' How evil and destructive to the work and purposes of God.

The harvest is the end of the age v39.

See also Revelation 14:14-20. It will take place when Jesus comes again visibly in His glory to establish His kingdom on the earth. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Of the word 'come' Vine says, 'The verb is in the point tense ... implying a catastrophe as in 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

The reapers are the angels v39. They are God's messengers from heaven, not His people on earth. God will send them in His time.

This Parable is Told for Our Instruction, Not Our Action It tells us why there is opposition to our message and even our presence. It tells us why evil things continue to happen. It tells us that God has not lost control, but hesitates to damage His harvest. It tells us that the evil being done now will be called to account in His time.

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19.

How Should We Respond?

FIRST We now know how to identify the works of the evil one. Jesus met this element in His day:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44.

SECOND It is one of his wiles, his schemes, to employ a destructive terrorist, 'an enemy in the night.' 'We are not unaware of his schemes,' are we? Or, are we?

THIRD Paul tells us how to withstand Satan: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:10&11.

Bible quotations in this study are from the NIV, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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