

What is the parable of the wheat and the weeds about?

„Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 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: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear.“
(Matthew 13,36-43)

On several occasions, while preaching in parables about the Kingdom of God, Jesus used the phrase, “ *Who has ears to hear, let him hear.*¹” For example, in the Parable of the Sower and in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matt. 13:1–9; Matt. 13:24–43). With these words, Jesus is drawing our

¹ These are translations of the key terms οὗς, ὠτός, τό [ús] = ear, hearing, and ἀκούω [akúó]; that is, to listen, to hear, to understand, and to comprehend

attention to the fact that there is something in the text that we should reflect on carefully. It is no coincidence that Jesus used this warning in parables dealing with the development of God's kingdom; He describes the kingdom from various perspectives of its development, from Jesus Christ until the fulfillment² of this entire age. Here we will examine the parable of the wheat and the tares.

Natural Conditions

The world as we know it is a field in which the Kingdom of God unfolds, just as when a sower sows a seed and it sprouts and grows—first a stalk, then an ear, and finally full grain in the ear—day and night, while a person sleeps and rises in the morning, without even realizing how (Mark 4:26–29). In other words, the Kingdom of God develops and moves toward its goal naturally, continuously, and without our awareness, just like plants in a field. It is encouraging that the development and condition of God's people do not depend on us, nor on the condition of the churches. We can contribute to its growth, but we cannot stop or thwart it. God's adversary and his servants (sons) are actively striving to do just that, but to no avail.

Jesus told his Twelve that righteousness lies in his departure to the Father, after which they would no longer see him (John 16:8–10). At the Last Supper, He also told them

² The Greek word συντέλεια [synteleja] means completion, fulfillment, or end

that He would not drink of this fruit of the vine until He drank it anew with them in the Kingdom of God. Both of these statements indicate that the development of the Kingdom of God must take place under natural conditions, without divine interventions similar to those God performed in guiding the people of Moses under the first covenant.

The Sower is the Son of Man

Here, Jesus speaks of himself as the Son of Man. He is the first to sow the good word about the kingdom into the hearts of the apostles and many others, making them sons of the kingdom. He sent his apostles out in pairs so that they, too, might sow the good word. After his departure to the Father, his apostles and the 120 disciples—who received the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (the Old Testament feast of Shavuot, meaning “weeks”³ in Hebrew)—became sowers. And following them, generations of Jesus’ other followers have taken up the mission of sowers, right up to the present day. All are sons and daughters of man, for they were born of a woman (Matt. 11:11; Gal. 4:4).

³ Shavuot has many aspects, which is why it is known by various names. In the Torah, it is referred to as the Feast of Weeks (Hebrew: חַג הַשָּׁבוּעוֹת, Chag ha-Shavuot), the Feast of Harvest (Hebrew: חַג הַקָּצִיר, Chag ha-katsir), or the Day of First Fruits (Hebrew: יוֹם הַבִּכּוּרִים, Yom ha-bikurim). The Mishnah and the Talmud refer to Shavuot as Aceret (Hebrew: עֲצֶרֶת, “solemn assembly”). Since Shavuot takes place 50 days after Passover, it has come to be known as Pentecost (Greek: πεντηκόστη, “fiftieth [day]”) among Christians in many countries.

Sons of the Kingdom and Sons of the Enemy

Jesus said something very important: “... *The kingdom of God comes not with outward observation: 21Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.*” (Luke 17:20–21) At that moment, Jesus was clearly referring to himself. This corresponds exactly to what Jesus says in the parable of the wheat and the weeds. The field is the (entire) world, and therefore we are not to seek the Kingdom of God in Rome or Jerusalem, nor in any other specific place, because the Kingdom of God is wherever the sons of the Kingdom are. How do we recognize them? Jesus gave the fundamental sign: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” And later, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote that God disciplines us to make us his children (Heb 12:5–7). Furthermore, we should examine whether those who call themselves Christians bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). And John wrote simply: “By this the children of God and the children of the Devil are known: whoever does not practice righteousness and does not love his brother is not of God.” The sons of the Evil One do not bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–23), but rather the spirit of God’s adversary. Its fruit is selfishness, strife, wars, spiritual darkness, and many other traits and deeds that threaten life. They do not possess the true love of Christ. Their deeds and words ultimately lead to darkness and death. Sometimes, however, this becomes apparent only after several generations. Unfortunately, they are everywhere—

even in churches. Fortunately, the sons of the kingdom are also present among them.

Everything is coming to a head

Looking back at Christian history, we see a gradual decline of the Church. One of the consequences of this is the fragmentation of the Church into many other reformed churches and Christian organizations. The current state of Christian nations is the result of the work of the sons of the Evil One. This is because the world still lies in the power of the Evil One (1 John 5:19). Jesus said to Simon Peter: “*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:* ” (Luke 22:31). God’s adversary seeks to prove that man is fundamentally flawed, beyond redemption, and constantly accuses and brings charges against us before the Father (Revelation 12:10). Unfortunately, many people have believed his deceptions and tricks. He exploits to the extreme the fact that everything is supposed to unfold under natural conditions, without God’s direct interventions—through which God saved and disciplined Israel in the past. Behind everything that has taken place throughout human history lies a conflict that God’s adversary instigated in heaven and brought down to earth. Most people have no idea of this. They do not realize that atheism and other ideologies that question and attack God’s existence, His power, and His natural order are a deception designed to sever people from God and His Son and to deter them from seeking the way of life and the hope

of eternal life, redeemed by the blood of Jesus (Rev. 12:11). Satan exploits the natural development of humanity, knowing that God neither lies nor deceives. He knows that until this development is complete, God will not draw attention to Himself or reveal His power. This is one of the main messages of the parable of the wheat and the tares.

Until the harvest comes

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his followers for forty days (Acts 1:3) and, among other things, said to them: *“And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: 20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* (Matthew 28:18–20)

How are we to understand that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth and is with us until the end of this age, yet the world still lies in the power of the evil one? This is not a contradiction. Our first parents allowed themselves to be tempted onto the path of death (Gen. 3:3–4, 19). That path is orchestrated by God’s adversary. Until everything is resolved, Satan has the right to test humanity. Since Jesus’ departure to the Father, God’s kingdom has been like a child who must come of age before taking possession of his inheritance. Thus, God and Jesus can protect their offspring as part of its natural

development, but they cannot establish God's kingdom until everything has come to maturity.