

Lesson 4. Parable of Tares & Wheat, Matt 13:24–30; Satanic Emissaries Invade the Wheat; Jesus’ Angels Separate the Tares from the Wheat (v. 30); Parable of the Mustard Seed, Matt 13:31–32; the Church Begins with Apostles & Grows Globally for Almost 2,000 Years; Parable of the Leaven, Matt 13:33; Yeast Leaves Dough: Erroneous & Accurate Interpretations

4. Dr. Scofield’s footnote at Matthew 13:24 is very instructive:

The wheat of God at once becomes the scene of Satan’s activity. Where children of the kingdom are gathered, there, “among the wheat” (vv. 25,38,39), Satan sows “sons of the evil one,” who profess to be children of the kingdom and, in outward ways, are so like the true children that only the angels may, in the end, be trusted to separate them (vv. 40–43). So great is Satan’s power of deception that the tares often really suppose themselves to be children of the kingdom (7:21–23).¹

5. The “sleeping men” of this passage do not imply that the believers disregard the problem but that the enemy is deceitful and thus threatens the harvest.
6. The servants, or believers, who observe the presence of human good and evil in the world, ask the landowner if he wants them to weed out the tares from the field.

Matthew 13:27 - And the servants of the landowner came and said to him, “Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?”

v. 28 - “And He said to them, “An enemy has done this!” And the servants said to Him, “Do You want us then to go and gather them up?”

v. 29 - But He said, “No, lest while you are gathering up the tares you may root up the wheat with them.”

7. If you don’t remember all the personifications in this parable then you will quickly draw erroneous conclusions. The “field” is not the church but the devil’s world. The tares are not unbelievers but their cosmic production, which is intended to counterfeit, corrupt, or discredit the believer’s production of divine good.
8. Believers are in view but the emphasis is on their spiritual growth that eventually produces fruit. Simultaneously, the emissaries of Satan perform deeds of human good and evil designed to undo all the “sowers of truth” accomplish.

¹ Ibid., Matthew 13:24fn.



9. This concept is true in every dispensation as is made clear in the following passages:
- 1) A teacher teaches and a false teacher will come in with a false corrigendum. A corrigendum notes an error in a printed work discovered after printing and is shown with its correction on a separate sheet. False teachers alleged that Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians was in error and they claimed they had the updated version. Paul refutes this claim in:

2 Thessalonians 2:2 - ... be not easily shaken in mind or disturbed, neither by a personality [false teacher], nor by a policy [false doctrine], nor by a forged epistle [false corrigendum] as if from us, alleging that the Tribulation is now present.
 - 2) A pastor teachers and false teachers come right behind him and refute his message:

3 John 9 - I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes (Die-ótt-ra-pheez), since he has a lust for power in the local church, does not recognize the authority of our message.
10. In the "field" of the devil's world, the presence of human good and evil crowds out the production of the believer who is motivated by the Holy Spirit to execute divine good.
 11. The "servants" are those believers of any dispensation who notice the presence of human good and devil in the world.
 12. Their desire, expressed in verse 28, is for permission to start fighting the problem by eliminating the tares: those who appear to be righteous, but are only imposters.
 13. Our Lord's response is a firm No! Only He knows those who are His and He is the only one qualified to conduct a perfect evaluation of their works.
 14. If believers seek to go out into the devil's world and right all the wrongs, they will do great harm and damage to believers, whom they mistake for tares, while overlooking unbelievers, whom they mistake for wheat.

15. Consequently, our Lord is telling them to stay out of crusader arrogance, civil disobedience, revolution, and anti-authority arrogance.
16. He instead advises them to leave the world alone, quit trying to legislate a perfect environment by force, which can only be accomplished by grace.

Matthew 13:30 - "Allow both to grow together until the harvest [**Second Advent**]; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers [**a battalion of elect angels**], 'First gather up [**baptisms of fire**] the tares [**unbelievers**] and bind them in bundles to burn them up [**incarceration into Torments**]; but gather the wheat [**believers**] into my barn [**the millennial kingdom**],'"

1. Jews who are alive at the Second Advent will be dealt with in the manner described in verse 30. Unbelievers will be sent to Torments, believers into the millennium.
2. Those Jews who live in the Church Age will be dealt with by our Lord at the rapture of the church. All who believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, will be withdrawn from the battlefield while all unbelievers will remain behind.
3. Principle: The only way the problems of *cosmos diabolicus* can ever be brought under control, much less resolved, is through the administrative abilities of Jesus Christ at the Second Advent and His subsequent millennial reign.
4. In the Church Age, all we can hope to do is offer some restraint upon the "mystery of lawlessness which is already operational" mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:7.
5. Proper restraint of the tares and their influence is accomplished through the enlargement of the Pivot of mature believers who have maximum wisdom to discern and analyze the insidious activities of cosmic legerdemain.
6. This parable and others in Matthew 13 alert us to the fact that major problems exist in our society and they are not uncommon. History proves they cannot be resolved in the manner so many believers throughout the generations of human history have chosen to try.

7. All attempts to rid the world of tares only compound the problem. The message from this parable is to first discern the problem, identify the rhetorical veils designed to lure us into some energy-of-the-flesh solution, and avoid being deceived by it.
8. With doctrine we are equipped to stand fast behind truth and watch the deliverance of the Lord.
9. What follows next is the parable of the mustard seed and the leaven. Following them the Lord retires from the seashore where he had addressed the multitudes and goes into a house in Capernaum where he privately speaks with his apostles.
10. In Matthew 13:37–43 the Lord gives them a private analysis of the parable of the tares and the wheat. Then, beginning with verses 44 through 50, He privately teaches them three additional parables.
11. We have just completed a look at his public delivery of the parable of tares and wheat. We will stay with the context and note the next two parables delivered publicly to the multitudes. Following that we will go into the house for our private lessons.
12. We now resume our passage at verse 31 with the next parable.

F. The Parable of the Mustard Seed, Matthew 13:31-32.

Matthew 13:31 - He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field;

v. 32 - and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

1. In all, the botanical kingdom, no plant has a smaller beginning than does the mustard.
2. Yet no plant attains greater height than does the mustard plant, sometimes as high as 12 feet, providing space for birds to nest.
3. Our Lord has just begun to introduce His kingdom to the world. He has recently appointed 12 apostles, one of whom would defect.



4. His kingdom would eventually grow to vast proportions and include every people and race on earth, presently running for almost two millennia.
5. That which has the smallest of beginnings will eventually become global in its impact.
6. Other kingdoms have been described in Scripture as trees that provide protection for its citizens.
7. Birds nested, beasts found shade, and all living creatures fed themselves from the source of the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's vision in Daniel 4.
8. His, as well as other empires, rose to power through military preparedness and fell because they could not defend themselves from predator nations.
9. The Chaldean Empire fell to the forces of the Meds and the Persians under Cyrus and Darius.

The Medo-Persian Empire was overtaken by the Greek armies of Alexander the Great.

The Hellenistic Empire was eventually defeated by the legions of *Senatus Populusque Romanus*.

The Roman Empire survived almost a millennium but finally fell at the hands of barbarian hordes that had infiltrated its borders.

10. No nation can sustain any piece of real estate for very long unless it is able to defend it militarily.
11. But, during the continual rise and fall of nations throughout history, the "kingdom of heaven" keeps growing and growing and growing.
12. It has no military but has a defense system that cannot be challenged by the forces of the devil's world.
13. David described the invincibility of the believer with his statement in:

Psalm 56:4 - In God, whose Word I praise, in God I have put my trust. I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?



14. At the end of the Church Age, a countless number of believers will be raptured out of this worldly field while later, at the Second Advent, an unknown number of Jews will enter into the millennial rest of our Lord.
15. Although cosmic didactics will make every attempt to neutralize the growth of the kingdom, that effort will fail.
16. Nevertheless, the battles of the Angelic Conflict will rage throughout human history as Satan desperately seeks to check the growth of the kingdom. This is the subject of the next parable.

G. The Parable of the Leaven: Matthew 13:33.

Matthew 13:33 - He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal until it was all leavened."

Any substance used to produce fermentation, as in dough. Anything which makes a general assimilating change in a mass. To permeate or infuse with a transforming element, specifically, yeast.²

Yeast is the common name for about 160 species of single-celled fungi. Bakery goods are usually prepared from flour or meal derived from some sort of grain. Almost all commercial breads are leavened with bakers' yeast. It performs its leavening function by fermenting such sugars as glucose, fructose, maltose, and sucrose.

The rate at which gas is developed by yeast during the various stages of dough preparation is important to the success of bread manufacture. Gas production is partially governed by the rate at which fermentable carbohydrates become available to the yeast.³

1. In the ancient world a small lump of leavened bread would be saved from a previous baking. When a fresh batch of dough was made, the leavening process was introduced by kneading the old lump into it.
2. In theological circles, there are two interpretations of the use of leaven in this parable. I will first present a synopsis of the one with which I disagree. I will then present reasons why I disagree. The polemic will lead us into a study of what I believe to be the accurate interpretation of this parable.

² *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. "leaven."

³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Baking and bakery products."



3. **The Erroneous View.** Leaven represents the Holy Spirit's work in the Church Age, eventually pervading the entire world. The message of the metaphor is said to show the far-reaching impact which comes from a small beginning.

When the leaven is introduced into the meal, its progress is steady, continuous, and irreversible. Thus, the Holy Spirit will eventually permeate the kingdom during the Church Age.

4. I reject this interpretation for the following reasons. First, our Lord made clear in previous parables that the "kingdom of heaven" is a period of time in which two major systems of didactics are operational.
5. However, the "kingdom" is not limited to the Church Age only but also includes the dispensations of the Incarnation and the Tribulation. Consequently, the meal, which the woman leavens, consists of three measures and it will eventually permeate the whole loaf.
6. Leaven is generally regarded throughout Scripture as representative of human good, evil, and corruption.
7. Thus, when leaven is kneaded into the dough it is symbolic of evil's presence in the kingdom.
8. This evil is manifest by religion whose lie corrupts truth as it gradually spreads throughout the loaf.

