

## The Mind of Christ - Lesson 107

May 21, 2021

Welcome to another edition of The Mind of Christ. We are tackling this theme and began many months ago to go through everything that Jesus said and did. Some of those have been recorded for over a year now. There were other things that we taught in a live setting before then. We've covered a lot of ground in our many recordings. I'm not sure how many but quite a few ... probably over 50 now. We are making our way through the New Testament; everything that Jesus said and did in order for us to be able to understand the mind of Christ. If this is your first time listening, you're right in the middle of process.

Today is a continuation of a section of Scripture that's found primarily in **Matthew 13:24-30** and some other places in Mark and Luke. We'll refer those as we go. We typically know these as "kingdom parables". The one that we will finish up today is the "Parable of the Sower" or "The different or Four Kinds of Soil" that constitute people within the kingdom of God and then we will also look at the Parable of the Tares Among the Wheat" found in **Luke 8:13-14** and **Mark 4:18-25**, the weeds among the wheat.

As you remember in the "Parable of the Sower" we read that the sower went out to sow the seed. The seed fell upon four different grounds; the pathway soil that was beaten down and hard, the thorns where the Word of God was choked out and didn't grow, the rocky soil where it sprang up quickly but then was scorched by the heat, and now we're going to talking about the fourth kind of soil; the good soil and then we'll move into the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. So, let's finish up this one section called the "good soil".

### **Matthew 13:24-30**

<sup>24</sup> Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

<sup>27</sup> "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

<sup>28</sup> "'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

<sup>29</sup> "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

If every heart was "**good soil**", how different the world would be. The characteristics of a "**good soil**" person is one who:

1. Hears the Word, 2. Understands the Word, and 3. Bears fruit in various degrees

It sounds so simple. I wish that were true. **Mark 4:20** uses the term "accept it" regarding the word that was sown. "Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown." There is the idea of "accepting the Word of God".

**Luke 8:15** says, they have ‘heard the Word with an honest and good heart’ and holds it fast. “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in “an honest and good heart”, and hold it fast, and bears fruit with perseverance.” So Luke goes into a little more detail as to what constitutes the reception of the word.

The idea of ‘to accept’ in **Mark 4:20** is a Greek word “paradechomai” (παραδεχομαι). It means to accept near, to admit, to delight in or to receive something. This is the word Luke uses as a term of accepting the Word of God.

Paul was accused of proclaiming customs that the Gentiles could not “accept” in his testimony of Him. **Acts 22:18** Paul tells about Jesus speaking to him saying: “I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly because they will not accept your testimony about me.’” There’s the word “accept” again. Instead, Jesus “sent him” far away to the Gentiles. In **1 Timothy 5:19** Paul tells Timothy not to receive or to “accept” an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. It is becoming more and more rare for people to embrace the Word and to let it lead them wherever it will ‘lead’ them. I can tell you in my ministry it is getting more and more difficult for people to just accept the Word of God and to let that Word work in their lives.

Luke speaks of a heart that is called an honest and *good* heart. The two words here are “good”; ‘kalos’ (καλος) and ‘agathos’ (αγαθος) meaning a beautiful, or good, or it’s a quality of disposition or, it can even mean fertile or rich. It’s a useful, a profitable or an excellent heart that will exercise choice or select “goodly”. There are just so many different applications to this word “good”. In **Luke 14:34** salt that loses its flavor is no longer “good” (καλος) but tasteless and useless. In **Matthew 18:8-9** the word “better” in these verses is the word good. In **Matthew 7:17** every good tree bears “good” fruit. Then the word that is translated here “**honest**” is ‘agathos’ (αγαθος) meaning good or profitable, generous, beneficent, upright, or virtuous. In **Matthew 5:45** He causes the rain to fall on the good and the *evil*. In **Matthew 7:11**, “Evil people know how to give good gifts to their children.” And again, this is where the word ‘agathos’ (αγαθος) is used. In **Matthew 12:34-35** how can evil people speak ‘good’; the good man brings out of his good treasure what is good. In **Matthew 19:16-17** only one is ‘good’ and then in **Matthew 20:15** is your eye envious because I am generous or because I am ‘good’. These are all different ways in which the word is used.

**Luke 8:15** says the word in “an honest and good heart” must be held fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. So, this good soil is where someone has a good honest heart and once he receives the word, he holds fast to the word. The word hold fast here is “katecho” (κατεχω). It means to hold back, to detain, to retain from going away, to keep or to secure, to keep firm or ‘in possession’ of something.

This word is also found in **Luke 4:42**, the crowds tried to detain Jesus; or to hold Him back. In **Luke 14:9** this word is used ‘to occupy another seat at the banquet’. In other words it’s to take that seat and hold it. In **John 5:4** here it is a disease that afflicts or holds a person. In **Acts 27:40** it talks about them ‘heading for the beach’. In other words, it has the idea here of they are going to be ‘held fast’ into the beach when that ship crashes into it. In **Romans 1:18** it is the idea of suppressing the truth, or holding the truth back. In **Romans 7:6** the law bound or detained or held someone back.

In **1 Corinthians 7:30** the word used here is “possess” and in **1 Corinthians 11:2** “holding fast” to the traditions is another way it is talked about. **1 Corinthians 15:2** it says you are saved **if you** “hold fast” the word I preached to you unless you believed in vain. Now ‘that’ Scripture is a *great parallel* for what Luke says in **Luke 8:1**. So **1 Corinthians 15:2** is a very good commentary on what Jesus is talking about in Luke. **2 Corinthians 6:10** speaks of having nothing or possessing everything. It means “to hold on to”. **1 Thessalonians 5:21** examine everything; hold on to what is good, don’t let it go. **2 Thessalonians 2:5-7** the man of lawlessness is going to be “restrained” or he is going to be “held back”. **Philemon 13** talks about the imprisonment of Paul, how they were holding on to Paul. **Hebrews 3:6** says to “hold fast” our confidence and the boast of our hope firmly till the end. *Once we have this hope we don’t let it go.* **Hebrews 3:14** says we are partakers of Christ **if we hold fast** the beginning of our assurance until the end. **Hebrews 10:23** we hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.

So, the **context** defines how the word is used but it is applied positively to *holding fast* to the traditions handed down, to the word that Paul preached, to the good, to the confidence that we have, to the boast of our hope, to the beginning of our assurance and to the confession of our hope. These are things that we “*grab a hold of*” and we don’t let go of. That’s the man who has the “good heart”.

Then He talks about the fruit that is born. It is born with perseverance. The word here, perseverance is used 31 times. It means steadfastness, consistency, endurance, not swerved from a deliberate purpose or loyalty. In **Luke 21:19** the word is used here ‘by endurance’ you will gain your lives. In **Romans 2:7** *glory, honor and immortality must be sought with perseverance.* **Romans 5:3-4** Tribulation brings about *perseverance*. **Romans 15:4-5** through *perseverance* and encouragement of the Scriptures we have hope, and God is the One who gives it. **2 Corinthians 6:4** we comment ourselves as servants of God in much *endurance* or *perseverance*. **2 Thessalonians 3:5** may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the *steadfastness* or the perseverance of Christ.

So why does Jesus set forth fruit in degrees here? He talks about fruit in regard to 30%, 60% and a hundredfold what was sown. Even the *good soil* produces various yields. I am really not sure what this means in real life. Does it apply to natural talents being put to use in our lives? Does it apply to how hard someone works or how much time and energy they put into a ministry? I think of Paul and Barnabas and Mark on that first journey and Mark turned back and Paul was upset with him. *Was it because Paul was producing at 100% and Mark produced only at 30%? Is 30% acceptable to God? What if we are capable of 60% or 100% and we only produce 30 percent? What if 30% is all we have?* What of the widow who gave **all she had** even though it was small compared to the rich who only gave **some** of what they had. Measuring yield in a life is difficult but *Jesus puts this in for some reason!*

In John 15 the purpose of pruning is to make it possible for the life to bear more fruit. When dead, damaged or unproductive branches are removed; then the energy and nutrition can flow more freely to the branches that are healthy and capable of producing fruit. So though I may not be able to measure the yield, I can know that there is a process going on with which I need to cooperate in order to allow God to do more through me. *The real question is not how can I do more “better” but how can I allow God to do more “better” without getting in his way?*

Luke doesn't do degrees of yield. In **Luke 8:8** He gives us here 100%. *Jesus says the key to producing much fruit is that the seed has to die (John 2:24-25)*. He explains that this means giving up your life to find it so we have to let God determine our yield. We **have to 'just' keep dying to self, submit to His pruning and desire to be as useful as possible to Him.** In other words, we probably just need to **"let God take care of how much of the yield there will be"** ... is it 30%, 60% or 100%. We just simply invest ourselves and allow God to use us to the fullest extent in our lives and let Him worry about what the yield will be.

Luke adds 'as He said these things, He would call out', "He who has ears, let him hear." The idea of "calling out" means "to send" or "to utter a sound". It can be of a cock that crows, to call, to cry out, to exclaim, or to invite. It's used in **Luke 8:54** in telling the dead child to "arise" and in **Luke 16:24** the rich man in torment cries out for mercy. **Luke 23:46** on the cross Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit". In **Luke 14:12** there is an invitation to the feast. So there are four cries that we find within these texts that I have just related: the cry of *invitation*, the cry for *mercy*, the cry for *healing* and the cry of *victory*. So, here is Jesus crying out **"Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."** That's the cry of *invitation*.

Is this like, "Is anyone listening? I hope you're 'getting this'" perhaps He was saying. Or, "Pay attention!" They all had ears but they all did not have 'ears to hear'. ***If God wanted to get through to us, couldn't He do it?*** Couldn't he "force us to hear"? He must not be able to, without violating some other 'ideal principle or truth'. To force hearing or compliance would either violate God's character or our character or both. This is why ***I think free will is a "God-trait" built into our nature, because we share His image.*** However, God can override free will in some cases, but never in man's ultimate choice of salvation...that is, a desire for a relationship with God. ***To force a relationship violates the nature of a relationship.*** There is for us a frustration when communication cannot break through to connect with another person's understanding or compliance. We so desperately want unity or oneness or relationship through mutual love and respect ... voluntarily given, willingly offered, and received ... submission to one another out of reverence for Christ. We persuade, we manipulate, we command, we give consequences, we punish, we promise, but in the end, if a person does not have 'ears to hear' fulfilling relationships will not happen and lostness will set in.

Matthew tells the Parable of the Tares among the wheat. So, I want to read that parable from **Matthew 13:24-30** before we go on.

<sup>24</sup> Jesus *presented* another parable to them saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.

<sup>27</sup> "And the slaves of the landowner came and said, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

<sup>28</sup> And He said to them, "An enemy has done this," and the slaves said to Him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?'

<sup>29</sup> "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Allow both to grow together until, the harvest and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: 'First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

Okay, let's explore this parable together. So, it says He presented another parable to them. The word "**presented**" is a word that means *to place by the side or near*, to set before them. It's the word 'lambano' (λαμβάνω) in Greek. So He sets before them another parable. In **Mark 6:41** it says, "**And he took the five loaves and the two fish**". After blessing the loaves and the fishes he had the disciples 'set them before the people'. That's the same word that we find here as in **Mark 8:6-7** (λαβών). The word is also used in **Matthew 13:31** in the parable of mustard seed that the man "**took**" and planted.

To *inculcate* 'paratithemi' (παρατιθημι) as in **Acts 17:3** is the word is a word meaning to deposit, to commit to the charge of, it can mean 'interest'. **Luke 12:48** says, "To whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more". So when you set something beside someone, when you give it to them, you're *entrusting* it to them, you are *investing* in them. In **Luke 23:46** Jesus said, "Into your hands I **commit** my spirit". I am entrusting it, setting it beside you. In **Acts 14:23** Paul and Barnabas "commended elders to the Lord" or 'they set them before them'. In **2 Timothy 1:12** Paul says to Timothy that "He (God) is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day". The same word is used in **2 Timothy 1:14**; "**Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure which has been 'entrusted' to you**". *So when He sets this parable before them He is entrusting the parable to them.*

This parable tells us what the kingdom of heaven is like. The kingdom is one of Jesus' favorite themes and I have written about it much thus far in my journals. I had a discussion with a fellow that I know, his name is Brian Yost yesterday, and he kept saying he thought that I was "kingdom-minded". I wonder what he means by that. I think I will ask him some time, (so I did E-mail him). How do you think about the "kingdom"? How we think about the kingdom? Let's see what this parable tells us about what the kingdom is like.

The idea of it being "like" means it's similar or it resembles something, so the kingdom resembles "one sowing seed" ... good seed in a field. Since the seed is the Word of God, *to be "kingdom-minded" is to be active in sowing or teaching the Word of God to others*. When we go out, we go with a Bible in our hand and we present truths from Scripture into people's hearts. But something else happens in the 'kingdom'.

Those in the kingdom sleep, and while they sleep (or are unaware) an enemy of the one sleeping comes and sows tares among the wheat. What is a tare? Well, the word is "zizanian" (ζιζανιον) and it means "something that is false grain, a darnel. Darnelius is a type of grass seed. The vetch plants which are toxic to eat but can enrich the soil when turned under! There is a lot written about what exactly these tares are. Some call them 'counterfeit wheat'. There are pictures of these online ... of the wheat and the tares. If you look for 'darnel' or the word 'vetch' you may find these pictures. They do look similar but there is no comparison in quality or usefulness. Well, there is more on that later ... on the identity. No, I think I should get into that here for the rest to make sense.

In **Matthew 13:41** *He identifies people who are 'tares'* as:

1. They are stumbling blocks
2. Those who commit lawlessness

I doubt that these are separate groups but there are some differences here.

There are two ways He describes the tares: those who are stumbling blocks and those who are lawless. Let's look at stumbling block. The word is skandala (σκανδαλα). The idea is in "falling away". In the context of **Mark 4:17** it would seem to be *those who perpetrate affliction and persecution*. Perhaps this is why the early church feared Saul (or Paul) at first thinking he might be a "tare", among the wheat; those who cause others to stumble. *In the Jewish field, the tares would most likely be the Pharisees, who among other things do not even allow people to enter the kingdom, by their negative influence*. They proselytize, making the convert twice as much a child of hell as themselves (**Matthew 23:15**).

But the early church also had those who brought about occasion for stumbling. In **Romans 14:20** Paul cautions us "not to be the occasion for stumbling" to others *by what we eat*, but in **Romans 16:17** Paul speaks of a 'certain element' among the wheat ... those who cause dissensions and hindrances. The word "hindrances" here is skandala (σκανδαλα) contrary to the teachings which you have learned and **turn away** from them. What's the difference between **turning away** and *pulling them up*? That's just a question.

Such men are slaves, not of our Lord Jesus Christ but of their own appetites, and by their smooth and flattering speech, *they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting*. This appears to be an example of what Jesus was teaching in Matthew 13 about the tares. When He says to leave the tares alone until the gathering by the angels who will separate them from the wheat *does this mean that we 'tolerate' the tares? What actions do we take?*

Well, Paul tells us to do this: First you keep your eye on them; and second, you turn away from them. Those are the two things that Paul says for us to do. He doesn't *literally* say to "pull them up" so hopefully there is a distinction in our minds between 'keeping an eye on them' and 'turning away from them' instead of just totally "pulling them up"; but that's a hard distinction to make.

In **Matthew 18:1** it addresses the matter of causing a "little one" to stumble. He said *"it would be better" for the person to be drowned in the sea with a millstone around his neck than to cause a little one to stumble. He didn't say for us to carry out that sentence!* Then in **Matthew 18:7** and following He pronounces a **woe on the world's stumbling blocks** ... the man through whom they come. Then he talks about cutting off the body part that offends or causes stumbling ... the hand, the foot or the eye; these being destroyed in the fiery hell. Then He tells a story about the "*ninety-nine*" and the "*one*". He does not want anyone to perish.

Then when we see sin, we seek reconciliation. But if the person ultimately does not listen, He says *"let them be to you as a Gentile or a tax collector"*. All of this is from the context of **Matthew 18**. In some ways it looks like Jesus is saying, "pull up the tares"; separate them from the wheat. Well, could the problem be inequality with the kingdom with the local church? In other words, are we comparing the "kingdom" with the "local church"? There are some things we do within a local church that may not be done "in the kingdom" as a whole.

If we think about the parable as looking at the broad picture of the kingdom, the rule of God of all who claim to under His rule, (at this time, there are no Gentile converts yet) the Jews were a mixture of genuine believers who heard the heard Jesus and believed in Him, and the

hypocritical Jews, the false Jews, the counterfeit Jew ... the ones who claim Abraham as their father, but whose father is really 'the devil' (John 8); they look good on the outside but inside they are full of deadness. Could this parable be looking towards not a final judgment but to the destruction of Jerusalem? Read Matthew 24 in this light. Even to **Matthew 24:31** when He says the angels will gather the elect from the four winds and all the falseness He mentions in this prophecy are separated and identified.

In the early days of the church there was no distinction between Christians and Jews ... merely a sect of the Jews ... that's the way they viewed Christians. Perhaps Jesus was saying 'Let Me deal with making the distinction clear. If you try to do the pulling up, you are going to make a mess.' God made it clear who belongs to Him. His sheep hear His voice and follow. Paul revealed the distinction by preaching the gospel.

This tare/wheat metaphor in the days of the early church could be easily traced in Scripture; especially centering around the question over the law, circumcision, and special days. The Judaizing teachers were trying to 'enforce' these things upon the early Christians. Trying to get folks to go back under the old law for salvation was one of the greatest causes or occasions of stumbling in the first century. It was the job of angels to gather out of the kingdom the stumbling blocks. Of course, *some stumbled over Jesus Himself*.

They also gathered out those who commit lawlessness. Could these be the extremes: the stumbling blocks of the Jews and the lawlessness of the Gentiles? This was the great struggle of the first century. Those two extremes of trying to pull together in one body those who thought the law 'saves' and those who were 'lax' in their morals; how could these two exist when they are so dissimilar? Read Paul's letters and see the struggle over these two issues.

The Jews thought the Gentile pagans as rough and without morals, lawless. The Gentiles saw the Jews as prudes, too many rules, too strict, fault finders and self-righteous. The idea of lawlessness or "anomia" (against law) as an illegality, a violation of law; it's wickedness. **1 John 3:4** says everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. In verse 7 of 1 John 3 it gives the opposite, the practice of righteousness. In verse 8 those who practice sin are of the devil. Compare this to John chapter 8.

The Jews who claimed Abraham as their father; but yet they actually had the devil as their father. In **1 John 3:9**, those born of God do not practice sin because of His seed. This sounds like the parable. So, again, go back to **1 John 3:4-9** and compare it to the parable of the wheat and the tares. But notice in **Matthew 23:28** Jesus tells the Jews they appear outwardly righteous but inwardly they are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. In Romans 2 Paul makes it clear that the Jew is no better than the Gentile that they condemn. In **Matthew 24:12** in speaking of the coming destruction of the Jewish system, Jesus says 'with the increase of lawlessness the love of many will grow cold'.

So, the Gentiles did not have a monopoly on lawlessness. In **Matthew 7:23**, those saying, "Lord, Lord" and doing even miraculous things in His name can, in fact, not be known by Jesus, and be those who practice lawlessness. These must be rooted out of the kingdom, and by Jesus and His angels or His messengers.

*Could the angel messengers actually be those who preach the Word and the Word actually divides or separates the real from the fake? So to repeat this, lawlessness is not just about the Gentiles, but has a very Jewish application. Those who rely on the law, or anomia (against law). *We may be “pro-righteousness with our lips, but anti-righteousness with our very lives.**

The idea of the wheat being ‘sons of the kingdom’, and the tares being ‘sons of the evil one’ raises some questions. To become a son of God or the son of the kingdom, one must be born again (John 3) in order to enter it. **1 John 3:9** speaks of the seed within us. **John 8:44** speaks of Satan being a father. So, how does he give birth to his children? **1 Peter 1:23** tells us that we have been born again; not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable ... that is through the living and enduring Word of God.

Satan sows lies and he makes ‘converts’ through his lies. Jesus says the Pharisees traveled the earth to make ‘converts’ but ‘they’ actually become twice as much the son of Hell as themselves. What germinates inside a person? What causes them to be spiritually one kind of child or another?

From the parables, it seems to be twofold; the absence or ineffectiveness of the true Word of God. In other words, it’s stolen by Satan; or the shallow soil of persecution or thorns of worry and deceit. So, with the absence of the Word, there is a house swept clean and prepared for the demons. Satan spawns in empty places. He does not work well in those who are filled with the Word of God. A person pregnant with righteousness cannot become pregnant with lawlessness. It was the Spirit of God who impregnated Mary with the Son of God and it is the same Spirit who in connection with His Word must produce new life or birth in us.

**Now, clarification:** Satan cares not how much Word is in one’s head. He just doesn’t want it taken to heart.

The harvest is at “the end of the age” as opposed to “the end of the world”. Compare to **Matthew 24:1** and following. This will be a never-ending debate between the more *conservative* view and the more *speculative* view. I have already spoken about this in other places. I do believe it is reasonable to see “the end of the age” in this parable as the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in A. D. 70 though this certainly has a broader application. But if we can understand it in its most immediate context and application, we will do better in our more remote application if we keep it in a similar context and do not try to apply it to a completely different one.

In other words, what I’m saying here is ‘when we’re interpreting Scripture, like a parable of the tares, to keep it in the most immediate context of what is going to happen and what Jesus is going to be talking about in the destruction of Jerusalem, if it does apply ... if we can see how it applies there, then that is the more natural way to apply this parable.

The reapers are the angels. Jesus speaks of the reapers in **John 4:34-38**. Some sow and others reap. Already, he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life. Who does Jesus have in mind here as being the reapers?

Was He the reaper of what others had sown in the Samaritans in the past; or was He the sower into the heart of the woman and the disciples were going to reap or was the woman herself the sower as she told about Jesus and Jesus and the disciples were going to reap the harvest? Well, it's just hard to know who are the sowers and who are the reapers, and maybe you're both at certain times. The fields were 'ripe for harvest' that day.

My point is that *Jesus did not always see the harvest as at the end of the world. Harvest was seasonal.* The idea of the "burning with fire" suggests hell, but is it or does it 'have' to be? In other words, every time you see *burning something up*, does it have to be hell? It simply means: 'a means of destruction'. In **Matthew 3:10** John speaks of the ax already at his time 'cutting down the tree and being thrown into the fire *because it does not bear fruit.* **John 15:6** paints a similar picture of the one not bearing fruit.

If the immediate context of these verses is Israel's and Jerusalem's destruction, then it shows that God has mini judgments in the New Testament age as He did in the Old Testament age. His judgments on His people in the Old Testament were often applied to a nation, a town or a family. For example, in 586 to 516 B. C. in the capturing of Jerusalem and the seventy years of captivity, Daniel tells us at the end of the 70 "weeks" that the sacrifices will be cut off. After the tares are gathered, they are cast into a furnace of fire where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth".

The idea of being 'cast' or 'thrown in' suggests they didn't go willingly. The three Hebrew children were thrown into such a literal furnace but not burned up ... not a sign of weeping or gnashing of teeth! This idea of casting someone "into" a place or "out of" a place says there are those with the authority and power to do so. Of course this power comes from God who delegates such action.

Revelation 20 is the ultimate. *The angel that comes down from heaven, which is the authority here, holds a key to the abyss and the great chain.* He lays hold of the serpent, Satan, the devil and binds him for 1,000 years and throws him into the abyss. He shuts it up and he seals it. But this was not Satan's permanent home; only for a period set. He is released but later he was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone tormented day and night forever. Death and Hades are thrown here as well as those whose names were not found in the Book of Life.

Jesus had in mind 'forcible punishment' or 'retribution' but activated and carried out by His authority and in His time. Again, we're talking about what happens to these tares at this 'end'. *Is this furnace connected with the destruction of Jerusalem or with the end is the world.* Both are part of the same theme whether the judgment is within time and space or at the end of it.

In **Matthew 8:12** Jesus says the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But in verse 13 He says the sons who come from east and west that the Jews considered evil, (i.e. the Gentiles) will be accepted as the Centurion was.

In Chapter 8 He contrasts the faith of the centurion who was a Gentile with faith of the faithless Jews ... the natural branches and the **true sons** of the kingdom. This kingdom picture and the relationship must be followed carefully. But there is a theme here in Jesus' thinking and later with Paul in Romans 9 through 11. **Those cut off and thrown into the fire are those who do not bear the fruit of the kingdom; who do not live out the meaning of authority in it.**

Jesus says the sons of the kingdom are "the **righteous** will shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father" in **Matthew 13:43**. One *cross-reference* to this is **Daniel 12:3**. **Daniel 12 is clearly about the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70.** Note verse 7, "I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed." And verse 11, "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days." Jesus refers to this in **Matthew 24** in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem.

But also note that Daniel contrasts:

1. Some whose names are written in the Book (and again, Matthew 24 talks about the 'elect').
2. And some will awake to everlasting life and some to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

Some will have insight or ears to hear and understanding. **They will know the mysteries of the Kingdom.**

So in **Daniel 12:3** the righteous will be those who have insight and will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. In **Matthew 5:16** Jesus told his disciples to let *their* light shine before men so that their good works would be seen and **God glorified**. In **2 Corinthians 4:6** he talks about the light that shines in *our heart* to give "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." **Philippians 2:15** says we should be above reproach in a crooked generation among whom you appear as lights in the world.

Persecution caused God's people to "stand out" from the population! The true Christians rose to the occasion and were clearly 'marked'. They show in the world by both their willingness to die (Revelation 12) and their good works. Distinguishing a true disciple is not merely afforded by the doctrine they hold, but the stands they take, and who they stand with; the righteous 'dikaios' (δικαιος), innocent, the holy, the just, one who acts evenhandedly or just to all, one who, in character, is impartial and right with God. So, who do we stand with? Do we stand with the righteous?

The idea of the righteous ... **Genesis 6:9** about Noah, he was a righteous person. **Genesis 18:23** on Sodom and Gomorrah they were searching for the righteous person. In **2 Chron. 6:23** the distinction is made about punishing the wicked and justifying the righteous. In **Psalms 1:5** the wicked will not stand in the assembly of the righteous. In **Psalms 1:6**, God knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. In **Psalms 37:25** the writer has not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging for bread.

In **Proverbs 3:33**, “The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.” The wicked are connected with violence. In **Proverbs 10:6, 11** “Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence”, and <sup>11</sup> “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.” **Proverbs 11:10** says, “When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting.” Look at this in **Proverbs 12** and **13:2**. There’s a big theme here and I would need to analyze this to see how the ‘wise man’ would help redeem a city but notice in all these passages *there is a contrast* between the *righteous* and the *wicked*. This is the contrast in the parable of the tares.

There are two sets of plants in that field and they do grow together, but there is a distinction between the two. But we must remember in **Isaiah 64:6**, that “*All our deeds are like filthy rags.*” *Our righteousness depends on His righteousness.* **Malachi 3:18** says, “So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.” But it is not him who is righteous *in his own eyes* who is righteous, but the one *God makes* righteous by repentance and by atonement.

Note in **Luke 1:17** not only does Jesus or John the Baptist come to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, but the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous to make the people prepared for the Lord. In **Luke 15:7**, the 99 righteous who need no repentance; these are *self-righteous* people in that parable! **Luke 20:20** speaks of “those who pretended to be righteous”. In **1 Timothy 1:9** the law is not for the “righteous” but for those who kill and do other things; for the unrighteous. **James 5:16** talks about the prayer of a righteous man avails much. **1 Peter 3:12**, “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and the ear attentive to their prayer.” **1 Peter 4:18** says if it’s difficult for the *righteous* to be saved, how then the unrighteous? How will they appear? **2 Peter 2:7**, He knows how to rescue the righteous.

So, again, we see this distinction that is being made between the righteous and the wicked; between the tares and the wheat. *When will this separation take place?* I lean towards 70 A. D., application of the wheat and the tares, but I can see a broader application for the end times as well.

I present this to you today for us to take a hard look at when we view a parable; that we are careful at the interpretation of the parable so that we don’t get locked into just a “first impression” that we may have of the parable because there’s more at stake here. Keeping things within the historical context is very, very important to our understanding of them.

Well, thank you for joining us today. We’re not finished with the kingdom parables in this section of Scripture. We’ll take this up later at our next session.

If you want to go back to see our archived presentations on The Mind of Christ you can go to <https://www.centalsarasota.org/> where you can link to all of the things we have done in the past.

Thank you for joining us today. God bless you and take care and have a great day.