

The Parable of the Wheat & Tares

Steve Lewis - www.spiritandtruth.org

(Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

The *Parable of the Sower* was an introductory or transitional parable Jesus told to communicate why He began teaching the multitude in parables. In Jesus' explanation of that parable, He gave several reasons why the hard-hearted Israelites had rejected their Messiah and King, resulting in the postponement of the kingdom. In Matt 13:24 Jesus will turn back to the multitude standing on the shoreline and tell them another parable. This is the first parable in the series which is specifically identified as being about the "kingdom of heaven," which had been rejected by the Israelites and would be postponed until a time when the nation would willingly meet the spiritual qualifications for it to be established.

In this study we will look at the original story to the crowd in verses 24-30, and then we will bring in verses 36-43 to see Jesus' own explanation for the meaning of this story. Beginning in this parable, Jesus will start to share some of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" which He promised in Matt 13:11. These are prophetic glimpses into the characteristics of the time period between Israel's rejection of her King and their eventual acceptance of Him at His second coming in glory.

Matt 13:24 - Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

Jesus had spent a few minutes speaking privately to His disciples, answering their question about why He taught the crowd only in parables and then briefly explaining the *Parable of the Sower* to the disciples who were probably with Him in the boat. Here "**Jesus presented another parable to them.**" The word **presented** is the Greek word *paratithēmi* which means "to place beside." Jesus is placing this new parable beside the one He had already given to the crowd. The word **another** is the Greek word *allos* which means "another of the same kind as before," so Jesus has turned back to the multitude and is telling this second story to **them**.

He began by introducing this parable with the words, "the kingdom of heaven may be **compared to...**" This is the Greek word *homoioō* which means "to illustrate by comparison." The point that He wanted to make – the content of His teaching – would be similar to something which appeared within the story that He told to the multitude. He said, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to **a man who sowed good seed in his field.**" Once again Jesus is using an agricultural metaphor to communicate this truth. Just as in His first parable, there is a man – the sower – who is scattering good seed in his cultivated field.

Skipping to Jesus' private explanation of this phrase, in **Matt 13:36** Jesus left the crowds and went into the house, where His disciples came to Him and said, "**Explain to us the parable of**

the tares of the field.” As before, Jesus gave the explanation of the parable only to His disciples, privately.

Matt 13:37 - And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, Matt 13:38a - and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom;

Parable of the Wheat & Tares	Jesus' Interpretation of the Parable
v24 - presented to the multitude	v36 - shared only with the disciples
v24 - man sowed good seed in his field	v37 - man = Son of Man v38 - field = the world good seed = sons of the kingdom

Jesus identified specific elements of the parable so that we can begin to understand what He wanted to teach when He used this comparison. The man who is seeding his field is the “**Son of Man**,” which was Jesus’ primary title for Himself throughout the Gospel of Matthew (see Matt 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8,32,40; 16:13,27-28; 17:9,12,22; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18,28; 24:27,30,37,39,44; 25:31; 26:2,24,45,64).

In Matt 13:38 He explained that the **field** is the **world**, which is the Greek word *kosmos* that can include “the world system in operation around us; the inhabitants of the earth; the ungodly multitude; or the whole mass of men alienated from God and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ.” As one commentator has said, “The field is the world. So we have here the fact established that after Israel failed, the Word is to go forth into the wide world.”¹ Notice that the field is not the kingdom and not the Church. The Son of Man is seeding the entire world with “sons of the kingdom,” so His children are not limited only to people within the nation of Israel.

The **seed** is identified as the **sons of the kingdom**. As in the first parable, the seed in this parable equates to people. In this case the seed represents the **sons** or children who are destined for the kingdom. Those who understood and accepted Jesus as the Messiah, as well as personally turning to God in repentance, are the ones who “have and to whom more will be given so they will have an abundance” (Matt 13:12). Their acceptance of God’s chosen King opened the way for them to participate in the coming kingdom. The entire nation of Israel may have considered themselves to be “sons of the kingdom,” but because of their rejection of the King and their refusal to meet the spiritual requirements for the kingdom, only the believing remnant would become actual “sons of the kingdom” (Matt 8:12).

The fact that God would broaden His horizons to include the whole world was a truth that was not a secret or mystery. Even from the earliest promise that God gave to Abraham, the Old Testament had said, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 28:14). Up to this point in the parable we have not seen a mystery being revealed, but it

¹ A.C. Gaebelain, *The Seven Parables*, Bible House of Los Angeles (1906): 12.

is encouraging that during the time when the kingdom is postponed the Son of Man will include the entire world within the boundaries of His field.

Those who come to faith in Christ during the kingdom's postponement are described in later New Testament revelation as "sons" or "heirs" (Gal 4:6-7). A son and heir is entitled to the inheritance, but he does not yet possess it. The inheritance of the kingdom was guaranteed, but the entrance into that kingdom will not take place until a future time (2 Peter 1:10-11).

Matt 13:25 - "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away."

In His later explanation of the parable, Jesus does not address the phrase, "**while his men were sleeping**." That is because He was simply painting a picture of how the enemy worked during the night when no one was watching. The field workers were supposed to be sleeping at night, so the enemy knew that was a time when he could do his destructive work without being discovered. **Enemy** is the Greek word *echthros* which means "a hateful or hostile person; an adversary or foe."

Tares is the Greek word *zizanion* which one commentary said is derived from 'zan' meaning "vomiting." Some Bible translations use the word **darnel** instead of **tares**, and both terms refer to the same plant whose botanical name is *Lolium temulentum*. Eating grains from this plant can cause violent nausea, convulsions, and diarrhea which in some cases resulted in death. So this enemy deliberately tried to ruin the entire crop which the sower was expecting his plants to produce. One scholar described the situation like this:

In those parts where the grain has headed out, the tares have done the same, and there a child could not mistake them for wheat or barley; but where both are less developed, the closest scrutiny will often fail to detect them. Even the farmers, who in this country generally weed their fields, do not pretend to distinguish the one from the other until both are well grown. They would not only mistake good grain for tares, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. ... The grain is small, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. Its taste is bitter, and when eaten separately, or when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as an emetic. In short, it is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat, grain by grain, before grinding or the flour is not healthy. Of course the farmers are very anxious to exterminate it, but that is nearly impossible.²

So, not only do the tares produce grain that is unhealthy, but while they are growing in the field they are almost indistinguishable from the wheat that is growing right beside it. Only after the wheat and tares have both produced heads of grain is it possible to reliably tell the difference. The tares produce heads that are light in weight so the stalks stand up straight, even after the heads have formed. It is different from wheat, whose heads become heavier so that the stalks bend over more as they ripen. This allows the farmer to go through the field during the harvest

² William M. Thomson, *Land and the Book*, Harper & Brothers (1882): 395-396.

and to cut the heads off the tares, putting them aside first, so he can then harvest the wheat without contaminating it.

Matt 13:38b - the tares are the sons of the evil one;
Matt 13:39a - and the enemy who sowed them is the devil

Parable of the Wheat & Tares	Jesus' Interpretation of the Parable
v24 - presented to the multitude	v36 - shared only with the disciples
v24 - man sowed good seed in his field	v37 - man = Son of Man v38 - field = the world good seed = sons of the kingdom
v25 - at night his enemy sowed tares in the field and went away	v38 - tares = sons of the evil one v39 - enemy = the devil

The enemy is the **devil**, a spirit being who constantly opposes and seeks to undermine the work of Christ. As Jesus was beginning His public ministry to the nation of Israel, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt 4:1). Satan exercises authority over the *kosmos* or world system (1 John 5:19). He is called "the god of this world" and can blind people's minds in order to prevent them from becoming believers (2 Cor 4:3-4). The devil deceives the nations and can use human authorities to hinder the work of Christ (1 Thess 2:18). To do this, he disguises his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15).

It is also revealed that Satan in his warfare will counterfeit the things of God, which will be in accord with his purpose to be "like the most High." He will promote extensive religious systems (1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Cor 11:13-15). In this connection it should be observed that Satan can promote forms of religion which are based on selected Bible texts, which elevate Christ as the leader, and which incorporate every phase of the Christian faith except one – the doctrine of salvation by grace alone on the ground of the shed blood of Christ. Such satanic delusions are now in the world and multitudes are being deceived by them. Such false systems are always to be tested by the attitude they take toward the saving grace of God through the efficacious blood of Christ (Rev 12:11).³

The phrase "**sons of the evil one**" refers to people in the world who are under the influence and control of the **devil**. By comparison, then, just as the tares are almost indistinguishable from wheat during all but the last part of their lifecycle, Jesus says it may be difficult to distinguish the "sons of the evil one" from the "sons of the kingdom" as they appear together in the world. Satan's counterfeit religious systems may appear to be good to the majority of people living in the world during the time before Jesus returns to establish His kingdom.

Satan is never an innovator but always an imitator. His counterfeits are people, his own attempted reproduction of the people of God. While the Lord is sowing the good seed who are His children, Satan is sowing tares who are his children. The counterfeit is in

³ Lewis Sperry Chafer and John F. Walvoord, *Major Bible Themes*, Zondervan (1974): 163.

appearance so much like the genuine the two are not distinguishable. ... When Satan sows his seed he imitates the good seed. It was to the religious intelligensia, the scribes and Pharisees, that Jesus spoke when He said, "Ye are of your father the [58] devil" (John 8:44). They were the ones upon whom Christ pronounced severe judgment, calling them hypocrites and blind (Matt 23:13-33). ... [A hypocrite] is playing the part of another. Such are the tares in this parable. They are Satan's children presenting themselves as the children of God.⁴

There will be "sons of the evil one" who may outwardly appear to be good and genuine, but who are displaying a false righteousness. One commentator said, "This parable, then, gives a remarkable exposé of the methods employed by Satan. He seeks to destroy God's testimony on earth by introducing ... a clever imitation of the real thing. And this parable reveals that he works from within: he sowed the tares among the wheat!"⁵

Matt 13:26 - "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also."

It was not easy to discover what had happened until after the heads of grain had formed and began to ripen. By that time it was too late to prevent the damage, which had actually been done quite some time before the seeds started to sprout. The field workers could finally see the tares with their heads of grain standing tall above the stalks of wheat, which were starting to bend over under the weight of their heads of grain. This shocking discovery led the field workers to ask the landowner some questions.

Matt 13:27 - "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'"

What we see here is the beginning of a dialog between the field workers and the landowner. These next few verses do not have any corresponding explanation by Jesus. They started by calling him "Sir," which was a title of respect. One commentator described their response:

The occasion of the conversation is the extreme surprise of the servants at the appearance of the darnel. They know, or at least assume, that their master sowed good, exclusively good, grain in his field. And yet amid the good grain they find the darnel grown so thickly that it can only have been sown on purpose.⁶

The situation they discovered in the field seemed beyond comprehension. They could think of no reasonable explanation for what they discovered as they surveyed the wheat field.

Matt 13:28 - "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'"

⁴ Lehman Strauss, *Prophetic Mysteries Revealed*, Loizeaux Brothers (1980): 57.

⁵ Arthur W. Pink, *The Prophetic Parables of Matthew 13* (1928), https://www.gracegems.org/Pink/prophetic_parables_of_mat_13.htm (accessed Jan 2024).

⁶ Siegfried Goebel, *The Parables Of Jesus: A Methodical Exposition*, T&T Clark (1883): 60.

The landowner's response showed that this situation must have been the act of someone hostile to him. Over-sowing his field with tares was a hostile and spiteful attack which would only be done by someone who deliberately intended to do him harm.

Parable of the Wheat & Tares	Jesus' Interpretation of the Parable
v24 - presented to the multitude	v36 - shared only with the disciples
v24 - man sowed good seed in his field	v37 - man = Son of Man v38 - field = the world; good seed = sons of the kingdom
v25 - at night his enemy sowed tares in the field and went away	v38 - tares = sons of the evil one v39 - enemy = the devil
v26 - after the plants bore grain the tares became evident v27 - his slaves asked why there are tares v28 - he said an enemy had done this; his slaves asked about pulling them v29 - he said "No, the wheat might be uprooted with them" v30 - both grow together until the harvest; reapers gather the tares and bundle for burning; wheat will be gathered into the storehouse	

The servants reacted to this news with a desire to solve the problem. They asked whether they should immediately remove the tares, forgetting for the moment that by that time the roots of both plants had become inseparable. Unfortunately, getting rid of the tares would probably result in the loss of the entire crop since the whole field had been over-sown.

Matt 13:29 - "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them."

First, the landowner reminded the workers that gathering the tares would mean losing the wheat, too. This would have been an extreme option for dealing with the problem, but that would mean accepting a total loss of that year's crop. The landowner was not willing to accept the loss if there was a chance of saving the good grain.

Matt 13:30 - "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 into my barn.'"

Here the landowner gave his decision to his workers. They were to allow the good and bad plants to continue growing side by side until the end of their lifecycle, at which time the reapers would then be called in to gather the field. At that time the landowner would give special

instructions to the reapers about how to deal with the mixed crop. He will tell them to gather the tares first. Because their stalks stand straight and tall, they will be easier to distinguish from the wheat. The tares would be bundled and then set aside so they could be dealt with later. Finally, the reapers would gather the wheat normally and bring it into the barn. After the good crop was safely in the storehouse, the landowner would be free to deal with the tares.

Matt 13:30 is the end of the parable that Jesus told to the multitude. The rest of the study will focus on Jesus' explanation to His disciples about the meaning of the story. Jesus will pick up the storyline and will give additional information as part of His private explanation of the parable.

Matt 13:39b - and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

The time of the final **harvest** equates to **the end of the age**. "**Age**" is the Greek word *aiōn* which indicates an extended, unbroken period of time. And "**end**" is the Greek word *sunteleia* which means "to bring everything together in completion or consummation." This is the same phrase that is used in Matt 24:3 which says, "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of **the end of the age**?'" The disciples clearly remembered what Jesus said when He used the phrase here in His explanation of this parable. They knew that He was talking about a time in the distant future when the "sons of the kingdom" will be separated from the "sons of the evil one" at the return of the King to establish His kingdom.

The devil's method is that of mingling the counterfeit with the real. It is that of introducing into the Master's own property that which is so [much] like the good that at first you cannot tell the difference. That is the devil's mission of imitation. It is the heart of the parable. What is to be the issue of the two sowings? Their time of operation is to be until "the end of the age," and until then the word of the King is, "Let both grow together until the harvest." Let these two sowings work themselves out to final manifestation, and then there will be separation.⁷

The workers would only have to wait for a few weeks or months in order for that season's harvest to arrive. But by comparison, we must wait for an extended period of time, until a "harvest" in the distant future when the good will be separated from the bad. At the end of Matt 13:39 Jesus identified the **reapers** as **angels**.

Matt 13:40 - "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

Jesus used the language of comparison in this verse when He says that "**just as**" in His original story the next step would be the burning of the bundles of tares, "**so it will be**" at the end of the age. Since Jesus equated the **tares** to be "sons of the evil one," we can substitute "sons of the evil one" for **tares** in this sentence and the verse could be paraphrased this way: "At the end of the age the sons of the evil one will be gathered up and burned with fire." This clearly presents a picture of the final judgment of these wicked ones. In the next verse Jesus goes on to provide

⁷ G. Campbell Morgan, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, Fleming H. Revell Company (1907): 84.

details about who will do the actual gathering, as well as what characterizes these “sons of the evil one.”

Matt 13:41 - "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

Matt 13:39 equated the **reapers** with **angels** who will carry out the Master’s instructions at the future harvest. Christ will not use men but angels to do this work. He says that they will gather them “out of His kingdom.” This does not mean that any of the “sons of the evil one” will be participants in His kingdom. One Greek language scholar explained it this way:

Parable of the Wheat & Tares	Jesus’ Interpretation of the Parable
v24 - presented to the multitude	v36 - shared only with the disciples
v24 - man sowed good seed in his field	v37 - man = Son of Man v38 - field = the world; good seed = sons of the kingdom
v25 - at night his enemy sowed tares in the field and went away	v38 - tares = sons of the evil one v39 - enemy = the devil
v26 - after the plants bore grain the tares became evident v27 - his slaves asked why there are tares v28 - he said an enemy had done this; his slaves asked about pulling them up v29 - he said “No, the wheat might be uprooted with them” v30 - both grow together until the harvest; reapers gather the tares and bundle for burning; wheat will be gathered into the storehouse	
	v39 - harvest = the end of the age reapers = angels v40 - just as the tares will be burned, so it will be at the end of the age v41 - Son of Man will send angels to gather all unbelievers v42 - who will be cast into the fiery furnace v43 - righteous ones will enter the kingdom of their Father

What this means is that, just as the wheat and the darnel are mixed together in the field till the separation at harvest, so the evil are mixed with the good in the world (the field). Jesus does not mean to say that these “stumbling-blocks” are actually in the Kingdom of

heaven and really members of the Kingdom. They are simply mixed in the field with the wheat and God leaves them in the world till the separation comes.⁸

The separation will occur at the time when Jesus begins to set up His kingdom on earth. In the last part of this verse we see two characteristics of the “sons of the evil one.” First, they are called **stumbling blocks**, and this is from the Greek word *skandalon* from which we get our English word “scandal.” It means someone “who causes ruin, destruction, or misery; or someone who is the cause or occasion for sinning.” Second, the “sons of the evil one” are described as “**those who commit lawlessness.**” **Lawlessness** is the Greek word *anomia* which means to live apart from the law, to violate the law, or to be unrighteous. As 1 Cor 6:9 says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?” There is no place for the unrighteous in Christ’s kingdom and they can never enter it.

The angels will gather the “sons of the evil one” ...

Matt 13:42-43 - and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

The judgment event that Jesus described will happen at a time when these two types of people are both alive on earth, and it will occur at the **end of the age** when Jesus comes to establish His earthly kingdom. This description is similar to Jesus’ prophecy in Matt 25:31-46, which is often titled the “Sheep and Goats Judgment.” The sheep are analogous to the wheat, while the goats are the same as the tares. This judgment will occur after the future seven-year Tribulation. At that time Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats – the wheat from the tares. The parable in Matt 13 is a preview in parable form of the prophecy that Jesus shared in Matt 25. The “sons of the evil one” will be **thrown into the furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** But the “sons of the kingdom” will **shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.**

There is a day coming, thank God, when this [88] age shall end. The age is necessary, but preliminary only, and it is at last to be consummated. The history of the world will not end with the consummation of this age. There is to be another age ushered in by the burning of the darnel and the garnering of the wheat, an age which shall be initiated by the King’s clearing out of His field all the things which offend.⁹

Summary

First, there will be a long period of time between Jesus’ rejection as King and His eventual coming in glory. This was a truth that had not been previously revealed in the Old Testament. A new age must come before the millennial kingdom is inaugurated. As one scholar has said:

The parable of the tares explains to the disciples that, in spite of the rejection of Christ by the current leaders of Israel, the promises and expectations about the coming kingdom would be fulfilled as God had said. However, before that time comes, some other events

⁸ A.T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament*, e-Sword edition.

⁹ Morgan: 87-88.

will take place relative to and in preparation for that kingdom. It is these events and the time frame associated with it that is the mystery unknown in the past and now being revealed in the kingdom parables.¹⁰

Even though the kingdom had been rejected by the nation of Israel and its coming was postponed, there will still be “sons of the kingdom” – those who will eventually claim their inheritance and assume their place in the kingdom – who will populate the world during the entire interval while the coming of the kingdom is delayed.

Second, the Lord’s disciples and all true “sons of the kingdom” have wanted to know when the kingdom would come. In this parable Jesus said that the kingdom will be established at the “end of the age.” As one classic study of the kingdom puts it,

His hearers desire to know when it will be established. ... This parable locates the establishment of the kingdom at the period of the harvest. To obtain the force of the parable it is requisite to supply the idea of the setting up of the kingdom as to manner and time and then to notice what things Jesus teaches are required before this will be done. The kingdom is not likened to any particular one thing in the parable but to the final result, the end. ... It is not likened to a man, or to his acts, or to the good seed which grows into wheat, or to the field which is the world, or to the tares which are mixed with the wheat, or even to the harvest; but all these are used to indicate how certain things must be accomplished until the end of the age, when the righteous, the gathered wheat, shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom.¹¹

Third, Jesus illustrated in this parable that the “sons of the kingdom” will live side by side with “sons of the evil one” throughout the intervening time period. It should not be surprising to see “tares” among the “wheat.” Jesus said that there will be “false wheat” mingled with the good during this age. Keep in mind that “sons of the kingdom” exist both before and after the Church Age. Matthew 13 is not dealing specifically with the Church, since the interim age extends well beyond the time between Pentecost and the Rapture.

The field is the world, not the church. We cannot keep the world pure from these kinds of people, but we can certainly do everything within our power to keep the church as pure as possible and free from immorality and doctrinal error. Church leaders cannot remove those with doctrinal or moral problems from the world, but they can excommunicate them from the local assembly, when the Word of God calls for such action.¹²

The existence of “sons of the evil one” within the world can only be remedied at the coming of Christ to set up His millennial kingdom. As one commentator expressed it,

In this age that shall span the time between the rejection of the King and His return, the sons of the kingdom shall exist side by side with the sons of the evil one. At the time the

¹⁰ Michael D. Stallard, “Hermeneutics and Matthew 13: Part 2”, *Conservative Theological Journal*, vol 5 (Dec 2001): 344.

¹¹ George N.H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom* (vol 2), Funk & Wagnalls (1884): 21.

¹² Middletown Bible Church, *The Mysteries of the Kingdom*, <https://www.middletownbiblechurch.org/matthew/mat13.pdf> (accessed Jan 2024), 13.

King returns and manifests His Kingdom, the tares shall be gathered out and the wheat shall be ushered in. ... It is when the King is sitting on His throne that all nations are gathered before Him and He separates the sheep and the goats.¹³

Fourth, in his desire to “be like God,” the devil, the enemy of the Son of Man, seeks to be worshiped as God. To accomplish this, he will create all kinds of false religious systems which he can use to deceive human beings into worshiping him rather than the only true God. As one commentator has said, “Satan’s biggest operation is in religion.”¹⁴ Throughout the age there will be a wide variety of so-called “spiritual” organizations that the devil will use to lead people away from the one true God (1 Tim 4:1-2; 2 Tim 3:2-6; 2 Pet 2:1-3; 2 John 1:7-11; Jude 1:4). There will be a wide range of options – some are completely pagan or animistic, some are occult or practice mysticism, while some are pseudo-Christian groups.

Here is one final thought before closing this session. Many “sons of the kingdom” have wondered why God allows the devil seemingly to have free reign during this interim age. One commentator shares an insight which puts the issue in perspective:

This is a point which has perplexed many. Why did the Lord permit the enemy to sow his tares? And why has He permitted them for so long, to occupy the principal part of the field? In other words, Why has God allowed the devil such long-continued freedom? This is not so difficult to answer as many may suppose. They overlook the fact that the leaders of this world rejected its rightful Sovereign; that the Jews preferred Barabbas. Having chosen a murderer in preference to the Lord of Life, both Jews and Gentiles have reaped what they sowed. The devil was "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:14), and having refused the Savior, this great soul-destroyer has ruled over them ever since!¹⁵

¹³ Jeffrey R. Benson, “The Kingdom Parables Of Matthew Thirteen,” *Central Bible Quarterly*, vol 22 (Spring 1979): 11.

¹⁴ Strauss: 58.

¹⁵ Arthur W. Pink, *The Prophetic Parables of Matthew 13* (1928), https://www.gracegems.org/Pink/prophetic_parables_of_mat_13.htm (accessed Jan 2024).