

## The Mystery of the Kingdom-in-Waiting

Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43; 13.47-50

With the Jews rejecting Jesus as their Messiah, His offer of a kingdom also took a turn. His parables reveal secrets about the kingdom that no one has ever known. Before Jesus reigns on earth, amazing things will happen. The wheat and tares, and the dragnet, reveal the first secrets.

### Wheat and Tares, and a Net Full of Fish

- Good wheat and bad tares; good fish and bad fish
- Both good and bad exist together for a time
- In the end, the good is kept, the bad is burned/thrown away

### Two Parables, Parallel Meanings

- The good news about Jesus goes out to the world
- ‘Wheat’ are those who believe in Him; ‘tares’ don’t
- Angels reap the ‘harvest’ at ‘the end of the age’
- Wicked are ‘burned’; righteous shine *in the kingdom!*

### Applying the Parable Today: Are You Ready for the Kingdom?

- Jesus’ kingdom was proclaimed, but not inaugurated.
- During the wait, some accept, others reject, the King
- When the King returns, there will be weeping, and joy



1. The parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13.24-30) is explained by Jesus (13.36-43). Let’s begin by making sure we understand the parable. What are tares? Why are they a problem? When do tares become evident? In the parable, what does the landowner tell his servants to do? Why? When will the wheat and tares be separated? What happens to the tares? To the wheat?
2. Now read Jesus’ explanation (Matt. 13.36-43). What is the field in which the wheat (and tares) is sown? Who sows the wheat? Who sows the tares? What does the wheat represent? What do the tares represent? When is the “harvest”? What does this phrase refer to? What is the destiny for those people represented by tares? What is the destiny of those represented by wheat?
3. The parable of the dragnet (Matt. 13.47-48) and its meaning (49-50) parallels the parable of the wheat and tares in both phraseology and meaning. Both parables begin by saying “the kingdom of heaven” is “like” or “may be compared to,” so we know Jesus is revealing something about the kingdom. What other parallel words, phrases, or meanings are there?
4. The phrase ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ is a Hebraism, a figure of speech in Hebrew, that describes extreme grief and anguish, but it does not tell us where or for what that grief occurs. It may be for different reasons, at different times. In addition to the uses in these parables (Mt. 13.42, 50), this phrase also occurs in Mt. 8.12; 22.13; 24.51; 25.30; Lk. 13.28). What does it refer to in each instance?
5. We’re not prepared to ‘flesh out’ these two parables. What time is represented by the growth before harvest and the dragnet being cast in the sea to gather fish? What event does the separation of wheat and tares, and good fish and bad fish, point to? When does Jesus say that “the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom” (13.43)? Since this points to a yet future time, how would you describe the time we are living in – the Church Age? How is our present spiritual experience related to the coming kingdom?