

Introduction

The parable of the wheat and tares emphasises that the church on earth is made up of both believers and unbelievers. We as believers have to make sure that we are wheat and not tares, and also to have a right understanding of the church.

Matthew 13:24-25: Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man sowing good seed in a field. The man is the Son of Man who came to earth to save men, and the good seed is the seed of the gospel. Its goodness is innate and brings forth goodness, salvation and regeneration. The kingdom of heaven here is the visible church, not the invisible catholic church. In the local church, there are those called there and saved by Christ. But while God works, the devil also works, sowing tares, i.e. professing believers in the church. The church on earth is a church militant. It is under attack by the devil, especially in these last days when there are many false Christs and deceived individuals. The pure gospel must be preached in the church because there are tares amongst the wheat.

Matthew 13:26-28a: Distinction between Wheat and Tares

Wheat describes true believers who seek to do the work of Christ. Just as wheat grows and bears fruit, true believers bear fruits of obedience, repentance and Christlikeness as they grow and mature. They are citizens of heaven, and live their lives in light of the gospel and Christ’s kingship over them. The tares look like wheat, but are entirely different plants. They do not bear useful fruit. They represent false believers planted by the devil in the same field for the corruption of the church. They are children of the devil, and they do his work, but claim to do it for Christ. We must be watchful as a church and as individuals. We start by making sure that we are wheat, and then we bear fruit for Christ.

Matthew 13:28-30, 36-43: Judgment of the Wheat and Tares

The wheat and tares are left to grow together until the day of harvest, when the wheat is gathered up while the tares are burnt. Similarly, on the day of judgment (which will come at the end of the world), unbelievers will be finally separated from the believers for judgment. As believers, our role today is to check our own salvation, be discerning and edify one another. In God’s time, He will judge. Unbelievers will be cast into hell where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. Unbelievers sin with impunity and live lives characterised by iniquity. They will be punished for their sin. In contrast, believers have the righteousness of Christ and “*shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (Matt 13:43), i.e. they will be glorified in heaven.

Which side will you be on? Make sure you have truly received Christ and have yielded your life to Him in obedience. May we be found in the bosom of Christ on the final day.

+++++