

Heavenly Horticulture and a Place Called Hell  
**MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43**

INTRODUCTION

“I will open my mouth in parables;  
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.”

**TEXT: MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43**

*24 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ’*

*36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37 He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*

This parable presents the best of futures, the worst of futures, and the fate of the whole world. Let’s look more closely at it.

OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE PARABLE

**1. Every person on the planet belongs either to Jesus or to Satan.**

In the parable, Jesus says that the field is the entire world. That means that this parable is applicable to everywhere on the planet. The wheat represents what Jesus calls, “Sons of the Kingdom.” Human beings who belong to Jesus are the Sons of the Kingdom.

The weeds represent what Jesus calls, “the Sons of the Evil One.” Human beings who do not belong to Jesus are called Sons of the Evil One. With this in mind, we need a little more explanation of what it means to be a Son of the Kingdom, and what it means to be a Son of the Evil One.

First of all, this is a reference to spiritual parentage. God has only one Son who is like Him, and that is Jesus. Jesus, like the Father, is God. Everyone who belongs to Jesus is a son or daughter of God by spiritual adoption. A foundational passage that teaches this is John 1:12-13

*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. –John 1:12-13*

To be someone's child physically is to have that person as a mother or father, but to be someone's child spiritually is a matter of faith. Everyone who receives Jesus and who believes in His name, is born of God, not of man. This is spiritual parentage.

People act like their spiritual parents. Those who do not know Christ are children of Satan. Look at how Jesus describes this spiritual parentage when talking to the Pharisees:

*[The Pharisees said to Jesus] "We have one Father—even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" –John 8*

Jesus is pointing out that spiritual parentage is about loving Jesus. The Pharisees claimed to know God, but rejected Jesus. Jesus pointed out that if God were their spiritual Father, they would love Him. Instead, their father is the devil. They behave like he does. He hates the truth, and so do they.

To restate the parable then: The whole world is the field. Jesus plants seeds. These are His spiritual children. The devil plants seeds. These are his spiritual children. All humans on the planet are either children of God or children of Satan.

Now, just so you don't think you were born with a Heavenly spoon in your mouth, remember that everyone on the planet begins as a spiritual child of Satan. In order to become a child of God, you must make a decision to receive Him, believe in Him, and to trust in Him. When you put your trust in Jesus, He transforms you into a child of God. Note this truth expressed in Colossians:

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. -- Colossians 1:13-14*

Jesus died on a cross to redeem us and to give us the forgiveness of sins. When we place our faith in Him, we are adopted into God's family. We go from being sons of the evil one to sons of the Kingdom of God.

## **2. Humans should never use violence to advance the Kingdom of God.**

In the parable, the workers are instructed not to pull up the weeds before their time, lest they pull up wheat by accident. In the parable, the farmer is careful about every grain of wheat, wanting to

lose none. Instead, he must wait for the harvest time. Then it will be clear to all which are wheat and which are weeds.

Jesus explains that the workers are His angels. They are being instructed by Jesus to not execute judgment on the children of the evil one until the proper time. The harvest time is the end of the age. The day will come when the angels will be sent to execute judgment on the evil ones of this world, but that day is not yet. Many times, people wonder why Jesus doesn't bring justice to the oppressed and punish the wicked. Why does He let evil continue unchecked? The answer is in this parable: Judgment will come at the proper time. If it comes early, many sons of the Kingdom will be lost.

You see, since all people begin as children of the devil, Jesus patiently holds off judgement to give all who will be saved time to repent of sin and trust in Him. If angels are told to hold off on judgment of the wicked because they will not be able to discern the saved from the lost before the end of the age, how much more should we as humans not think that it is our job to bring judgement on the wicked. Looking back at history, the Spanish Inquisition, Bloody Mary of England, and the Salem witch trials would be three examples of people thinking that they were doing God's work by slaying infidels in Christ's name. This has never been acceptable to Jesus. In our times, it is extremely rare that any Christian church or denomination resorts to violence to advance the Kingdom of God. That said, we see the error of Islam. Mohammed taught that the Kingdom of Heaven was to be advanced by the sword. This should never be said of Christianity.

### **3. The Kingdom of God will come to earth.**

John the Baptist expected Judgment of the wicked to happen as soon as the Messiah arrived. John's expectation was based on the Jewish belief at the time that when the Messiah came, He would purify the earth, removing all the evil people, and making the Kingdom of God the perfect country, with no sin.

John was close to being correct, but he didn't realize that before the sinners could be judged, Jesus needed to do the work to save the sons of the Kingdom! Jesus needed to die on a cross in order to purify all the citizens of the coming Kingdom. However, John was right that the judgment of sinners would precede the rule of the Kingdom on earth. He just had the timing wrong. Look back at our text to see this:

*The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*

When Jesus returns, the removal of the evil ones will begin the eternal joy of God's kingdom on earth. Now there are a lot of battles among scholars about how and when the earth is renewed, but all agree that ultimately, "Heaven" is a place called the New Earth, and all that the sons of the Kingdom will dwell there forever, in bodies, with God.

Have you ever looked at the pain and suffering of this world and thought, “It just shouldn’t be like this.”? You are right! The way God intends is the world without evil! The world as it should be!

*Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” –Revelation 11:15*

And,

*But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. –2 Peter 3:13*

This world will one day be dissolved, but a new world is coming. Those who are born of God will forever live in a wonderful place where there is no suffering, no tears and no crying.

#### **4. Hell is real.**

There was a time when this doctrine did not need to be defended. However, in our modern times, when people think they know better than God, many have embraced the heresy that says that there is no punishment for sinners, or they hold to its twin heresy known as annihilationism, which claims that sinners simply cease to be.

This text, among others, dispels that notion. Look what Jesus says:

*The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

If there is no Hell, then what do you call the fiery furnace that receives the wicked? And if all sinners cease to exist, who is in that place in which there is weeping and gnashing of teeth? Listen, Hell is horrible to think about. All reasonable Christians would hope for no one to be there, but it is precisely the horrors of Hell that God wants us to understand so that we understand the result of sin and of our need for a Savior. We must never take our preferences and force them onto the Bible, as so many weak-minded so-called Christians are doing these days when it comes to Hell.

This parable should be enough to prove the point. But just to shore up those whose faith is weak, let me bring a little bit more support. Speaking to the prophet Daniel about the end of the age, an angel of heaven said this:

*But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. –Daniel 12:1-2*

In our parable, Jesus Himself declared that there would be a place of punishment for sinners. Here is an authority just as trustworthy—one of His messengers from Heaven. He points to the judgment, when all people are raised from the dead, some to everlasting life, and some to

everlasting shame and contempt. Contempt and shame cannot be everlasting if a person is annihilated, ceasing to exist. The term, then, should be “momentary shame at best.”

This false teaching that removes eternal punishment for sinners is invented by those who do not love the Scriptures. Instead, they are concerned with making God look nicer to sinners. However, it has the sinister effect of declaring to sinners that there is no punishment for sin.

Again, look at the fate of the anti-Christ and the false prophet:

*And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. –Rev 19:20*

This Lake of Fire is a place that someone can be thrown into while he lives. This is a place. Hell is a place. People can go there. A thousand years after being tossed into Hell, the devil is thrown into the lake of fire. And guess who is still there?

*. . . And when the thousand years are ended . . . the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. -Revelation 20:7&10*

A thousand years had passed and Hell was still there, and so were the false prophet and anti-Christ. That is not ceasing to be. In fact, they will be tormented forever. They will be joined by more people too. Look again:

*And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. –Revelation 20:12-15*

The Lake of Fire is a place. We call it Hell. It exists. Those who say it doesn't exist, or that nobody is sent there, are false teachers and liars.

## CONCLUSION

With all this in mind, how should we respond? First, we should live as passionate lovers of Jesus, worshiping Him constantly and serving Him every day. Secondly, we should handle people with care. We never know when we are talking to someone who will have eternal honor, or someone who will have eternal horror and shame. Treat each person with dignity, and seek to bring them to know the Savior, Jesus, who can make them sons of the Kingdom.

