

The Parable of the Tares

📖 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

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We have been studying Matt 13. By way of review Matthew divides his gospel into narrative followed by discourse sections. Matt 11-12 is the immediate narrative that sets the context for the discourse in Matt 13. The narrative charts that generation's rejection of John the Baptizer, the forerunner of the King, and Jesus, the King Himself. The discourse that follows is Jesus' response to the rejection. It is the discourse given in parables on the very same day that the King was rejected. The fact that Jesus now spoke extensively in parables indicated a decided shift in His ministry. The kingdom was no longer "at hand" but was being withdrawn. When his disciples asked why He spoke to the crowds in parables He answered in 13:11 that it was not granted to them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but to you it has been granted. The mysteries of the kingdom are new truths about the kingdom that had previously been hidden in God. It is not a new form of the kingdom. The parables couched the new truths so that they were concealed from those who had were under judgment for rejecting the King and at the same time revealed them to those who received and were following after the King. The essential new component of truth about the kingdom is that an intervening age would now come prior to the kingdom's arrival.

There are eight parables and I have given you a handout outlining these eight parables. Technically the first parable is not a kingdom parable but rather an introduction to the kingdom parables. This introductory parable is the parable of the sower. It is not a kingdom parable because Jesus does not introduce it in the way He introduces a kingdom parable. Notice in verse 24 that he says "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to..." and in verse 31, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." This is the way Jesus introduces a kingdom parable but in 13:3 Jesus does not introduce the parable of the sower in this way. The parable of the sower is introductory and it is a sketch of Israel's response to the proclamation of the kingdom message in Matt 3-12. Thus the sower is not one individual but represents John the Baptist, Jesus and the Twelve who all proclaimed the kingdom; the seed is the message of the kingdom, that it was near and they needed to repent; the field where they flung this message was the house of Israel only. The house of Israel had four responses to this message. The first in 13:19 represents those Israelites who heard but did not understand. Their hearts were too hardened to understand the message and so the devil and his workers came along and took away the message so they would not understand. The

second in 13:20-21 represents those Israelites who heard but with only a little understanding. Their hearts were not adequately prepared. They initially received the message with joy but were not prepared to endure the difficulties associated with the message. When temptation came their flesh gave way and they fell away and did not follow Him. The third in 13:22 represents those Israelites who heard but with some understanding. Their hearts were not adequately prepared however. They saw some significance to the kingdom message but the worries of the world choked out the significance of the message and they fell away. The first three locations where soil fell show the influence of the world, the flesh and the devil on Israel when John, Jesus and the Twelve were proclaiming the kingdom message. The fourth in 13:23 represents those Israelites who heard and understood the significance of the message of the kingdom. They were the only ones who held fast to the message despite the world, the flesh and the devil. As a result they would bear fruit, indicating the reception of further revelation and understanding of the kingdom program in light of that generation's rejection. The parable of the sower then serves as an introduction to the kingdom parables which reveal new truths of the kingdom by way of parable.

We come to the second parable in 13:24. Let's begin with several observations. First, this parable is the second in the series but it is the first kingdom parable. It is properly a kingdom parable because Jesus introduces it with the expression in verse 24, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to..." This is what a parable does; it casts down a story well-known and true to life in order to illustrate a truth by way of comparison. As we will see all the parables in Matt 13 are well-known and true to life for a 1st century Jew. Second, when it says the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man or a mustard seed or leaven we are not to conclude that this means that the kingdom of heaven is symbolized by the man, the mustard seed or the leaven. Those who take this approach view the kingdom parables as referring to the future kingdom period of 1,000 years. However, what is revealed in these parables is not new information about the period of the 1,000 year kingdom. It was already known from the OT that during the kingdom there would be death and rebellion. What was unknown was that an extensive age between the two advents of the King would take place with these characteristics. As Toussaint says, "It must also be noted that these formulas do not mean that the kingdom of heaven is symbolized by the man, or the mustard seed, or leaven, or any other single object in the parables. It is simply used to introduce a narrative which represents truth relative to the kingdom."¹ Thus the parables teach truths about the present age that intervenes and relates to the future kingdom and is preparatory for it. Third, the truths relate to the time between Israel's rejection of the King and Israel's reception of the King. This time period is not to be confused with the Church. While I disagree with Dr Pentecost's overall approach his explanation of this point is helpful. He says, "The time period covered by the parables in Matthew 13 extends from the time of Israel's rejection until Israel's future reception of the Messiah. This means this program began while Christ was still on the earth, and it will extend until His return to the earth when He comes in power and great glory....Although this period includes the church age, it extends beyond it, for the parables of Matthew 13 preceded Pentecost and extend beyond the Rapture."² Thus, the time span covered by the parables is larger than that of the Church though it

does incorporate the Church.³ Fourth, the expression “kingdom of heaven” should be interpreted in the same way it has been interpreted in prior usage, as having reference to the earthly, Davidic, Messianic kingdom. No new form of the kingdom is being introduced. Instead the new truth about the kingdom being revealed is that an interadvent age will take place prior to its arrival. Fifth, the second parable is known as the parable of the tares. In verse 36 Jesus’ disciples refer to it as “the parable of the tares of the field.” This name points up that the central truth of the parable relates to the tares. Sixth, this parable was given publicly along with the first four parables on the day of rejection. What the crowds heard in vv 24-30 was the parable only. Seventh, the interpretation of the parable was given privately to the disciples. In verse 36 it says Jesus “left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” So only the disciples got the explanation of this parable. Eighth, since this first kingdom parable is explained by Jesus it is very important for interpreting the details of the other parables. This is important to notice because none of the other kingdom parables are given an explanation. Therefore we must keep in mind that to interpret their details correctly we need to interpret them in terms of the parable of the tares.

We now look in 13:24 at the first kingdom parable. Keep in mind that this parable relates to the time period between Israel’s rejection of the King and Israel’s reception of the King. In 13:24, **Jesus presented another parable to them.** The word **presented** is *παρατιθημι* and means “to place alongside.” A. T. Robertson says **Jesus “...placed another parable beside (παρα [para]) the one already given and explained.”⁴** Jesus is taking up some of the same imagery from the parable of the sower but employing different significations. He said to them, **“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. ²⁷The 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?’ ²⁸And 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?’ ²⁹But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Allow 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.” ’ ’ ”**

Since parables are all well-known from life and true to life for a 1st century Jew, in order to understand them we have to know what they knew about wheat and tares. Alfred Edersheim, a Jew from the 19th century who was raised in Judaism but later believed in Jesus as the Messiah, made these remarks about the **tares**.

“According to the common view, these Tares represent what is botanically known as the ‘bearded Darnel’ (Lolium temulentum), a poisonous rye-grass, very common in the East, ‘entirely like wheat until the ear appears,’ or else (according to some), the ‘creeping wheat’ or ‘couch-grass’ (Triticum repens), of which the roots creep underground and become intertwined with those of the wheat. But the Parable gains in meaning if we bear in mind that, according to ancient Jewish...ideas, the Tares

were not of different seed, but only a degenerate kind of wheat. Whether in legend or symbol, Rabbinism has it that even the ground had been guilty of fornication before the judgment of the Flood, so that when wheat was sown tares sprang up. The Jewish hearers of Jesus would, therefore, think of these tares as degenerate kind of wheat, originally sprung at the time of the Flood, through the corruptness of the earth, but now, alas! so common in their fields; wholly undistinguishable from the wheat, till the fruit appeared: noxious, poisonous, and requiring to be separated from the wheat, if the latter was not to become useless.⁴⁵

This invasive counterfeit was a well-known problem in Israel. It would seem then that what is in view is a landowner who had his servants sow good wheat in the field. Then, during the night, unbeknownst to the servants, a competing enemy went into the same field and sowed degenerate wheat. The two grew up among one another without being distinguished until the day the wheat sprouted and bore grain. Only then did the servants recognize the field was corrupted with degenerate wheat. They then asked the landowner how this could be if he only sowed good wheat in the field. He responded that an enemy had done this. They asked if they should go and gather out the degenerate wheat from the good wheat. The landowner said not at this time because the good wheat was too fragile and might be damaged along with the degenerate wheat. Instead, he said, wait until the harvest and then the reapers will gather up the degenerate wheat and cast it into the fire and then gather the good wheat into my barn.

The parable is a fascinating take on the development of the time period from the rejection to the reception. Fortunately, in verse 36, this parable is interpreted for His disciples. We read, **Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.**³⁷**And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,**³⁸**and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;**³⁹**and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.**⁴⁰**So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.**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,**⁴²**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.** There are several important identifications to make. First, in verse 37 **the one who sows the good seed** is identified as **the Son of Man**. This title is very important. Jesus applies this title to Himself 78 times in the gospels and two other times others are recollecting what He said about Himself. Jesus is **the Son of Man**. Where does this title come from? And what does it refer to? Most agree that it finds its roots in Daniel 7:13-14. This is where Daniel saw in a vision "One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion

Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed." The Son of Man is therefore the One who comes up to the Father and receives dominion and a kingdom that are eternal. So when Jesus uses this title of Himself what is He claiming? He is claiming to be the rightful King and recipient of the kingdom. What does the title **the Son of Man** mean? It definitely means that He is "a son related to mankind." He is a son related to mankind through Mary. Why is this necessary? Why is it necessary that He be a true human? Because only a true human can fulfill the original dominion mandate that was given to the first human Adam. Adam's mandate was to rule the world as a king for God's glory. Since He failed to do this One related to mankind has to come and fulfill this mandate. Jesus is that One. He is the Son related to mankind, the second Adam, who came as a true human to fulfill the original mandate. Until He does this history remains unfinished. So Jesus is **the Son of Man** and this relates to His true humanity. But does it only relate to His true humanity? Notice that Daniel says he saw one "like a Son of Man." This implies that the One he saw was more than just a man. We note that He also came with the clouds of heaven. This means that Daniel was seeing one come from heaven who was like a man but also more than a man. What Daniel was seeing was God coming in a human form. Therefore the title **the Son of Man** refers to God coming as a man. Toussaint says, "... the term refers to the union of God and man in the One who was to be the King of Israel."⁶ This is the identification of the **One who sows the good seed**.

Second, in verse 38, **the field is the world**. Before this time what was His field? Israel was His field. He had said, "Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Rom 10:7). Now His field is expanding. Why? Because that generation of Israel had rejected Him. Now what is His field? **The whole world** is His **field**. Does this not indicate a definite turn of events in the kingdom program? At least from the human perspective? This is something that had never been revealed before. Now the commission seems to involve not just going to the house of Israel but to all nations. This will become crystal clear by Matt 28:19, the great commission. Therefore God used the negative response of that generation of Israel to bring about a positive effect for the whole world. Now the whole world will have an opportunity to receive the Messiah.⁷

Third, in verse 38, who are **the good seed**? The **good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom**. The expression **sons of the kingdom** has become controversial because of its usage in Matt 8:10. As we turn there recall that while most of Matthew is chronological, the section of Matthew 8-11 is not chronological but thematic. Matthew organized the miracles to prove that Jesus could bring in the kingdom. But the miracles may have occurred during any time of Jesus' ministry and not necessarily before Israel's rejection in Matt 12 even though they are recorded prior to Matthew 12. This is the miracle where a Gentile centurion requested that Jesus heal his servant. The uniqueness of the account is that the centurion recognized his lack of merit for Jesus to even enter his home as well as His authority to merely speak the word and it would be done. In verse 10, "Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled." This is significant because there are only two times that Jesus ever marveled. "And he said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. I say to you that many will come from east to west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and

gnashing of teeth." Note that Jesus used the expression "the sons of the kingdom" and said that they would be cast into outer darkness. But in 13:38 Jesus uses the same expression "the sons of the kingdom" and says they are the "good seed." How then can we reconcile the two uses? How can Jesus refer to sons of the kingdom being cast into outer darkness and as good seed? There are two views. One is the view of Joseph Dillow. He holds that the sons of the kingdom are genuine believers in both passages. Therefore what Jesus is saying in Matt 8 is that there are Jews that are truly sons of the kingdom and will therefore enter the kingdom but because they are not living faithful lives like the Gentile centurion then they will not enter into the wedding banquet during the millennial kingdom. The contrast then is between a believing Gentile who is faithful and believing Jews who are unfaithful. He says, "These believers will experience severe grief ("wailing") and will be angry with themselves, or despairing because of their wasted lives ("gnashing teeth")."⁸ I refer to his view as the banquet exclusion view. He thinks these Jews will be in the kingdom but outside the banquet as a punishment for not living faithful lives. I find his view to be unconvincing exegesis. Two is the view of most other commentators. They hold that the sons of the kingdom in Matt 8:12 are the natural recipients of the kingdom promises because they are Jews. These Jews thought that because of their physical relationship to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob they would automatically be in the kingdom. Jesus is saying they are mistaken. Because they had no spiritual relationship by faith they would not be in the kingdom at all. Therefore they would be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The contrast is therefore between a believing Gentile and unbelieving Jews. Mike Stallard agrees saying, "The association of the terms "outer darkness" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth" with popular images of hell may be justified based upon the contextual reference to eternal fire in the Olivet Discourse (see Matt. 25:41)."⁹ Therefore, all that Jesus is doing in 8:12 is saying that the natural recipients of the kingdom promises should have believed like this Gentile but they did not. They therefore would be cast into fiery hell.

The reference in Matt 13:38 to **the sons of the kingdom** as being **the good seed** clearly refers to those who believe in Jesus. Since the field is now the world which is far beyond Israel the good seed refers to believing Jews and Gentiles during the interadvent age. That Gentiles could become sons of the kingdom was clear from both the teaching of John the Baptizer and Jesus. John had said, "from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham" and Jesus said, "...many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Entrance into the kingdom has always been through faith for both Jews and Gentiles. Thus **the sons of the kingdom** in Matt 13:38 refer to believing Jews and Gentiles during the interadvent age. Since we have come to faith we are **sons of the kingdom**. This does not mean that we are in the kingdom now but that we have kingdom citizenship now and will enter into the kingdom to come. This identification of **sons of the kingdom** as believers during the interadvent age is strengthened by the next identification.

Fourth, in 13:38 who are **the tares**? **The tares are the sons of the evil one.** By contrast they are unbelieving Jews and Gentiles during the interadvent age. The interadvent age is then viewed just like the field that has two

kinds of wheat growing alongside one another, one good wheat and the other degenerate; during this age the world will have two kinds of people living alongside one another, believers and unbelievers.

Fifth, in verse 39, who is **the enemy who sowed** the tares? **The enemy who sowed them is the devil.** This shows that the devil will be active in the same sense that Jesus is active during the entire interadvent age. Both will be sowing seed in the world. This is an important observation that we will return to later.

Sixth, in verse 39, what is **the harvest**? **The harvest is the end of the age.** In Jewish thinking there were only two ages; the age leading up to the kingdom and the age of the kingdom. At this time they were living in the age leading up to the kingdom. Thus **the end of the age** is the end of the age leading up to the kingdom. While the Jews already believed that **the end of the age** referred to the end of the age leading up to the kingdom what was new here is that there will be an intervening age leading up to the kingdom. At the end of this intervening age preceding the kingdom there will be a **harvest**.

Seventh, in verse 39 who are **the reapers** of this **harvest**? **The reapers are angels.** Clearly then the **harvest** is a judgment and the judgment will be carried out by **angels**. These are the good angels. The NT refers to "angels" 201 times, 86 of which, almost half, are found in the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is showing in detail what Jesus describes here in general; that angels carry out the judgments on earth at the end of the age. Thus angelic activity will intensify in a very visible and tangible way at the end of the age during the time we know as the 70th week of Daniel or the Tribulation (also cf 2 Thess 1:7).

In verse 40 Jesus returns to the comparison with the tares, **So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.** Since **the tares** are the **sons of the evil one** then the picture of them being **gathered up and burned with fire** is a reference to unbelievers being judged during the 70th week of Daniel. God must cleanse the earth of all the unrighteous in preparation for the righteous to enter into the kingdom.

In verse 41 Jesus explains further, **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, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** Some argue that since it says that the angels **will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks** then these **stumbling blocks** must part of an inaugurated kingdom before He returns. By this they are referring to having the kingdom within them. However, the kingdom is not inside people; people are inside a kingdom. The entire way of reading this as demanding an inaugurated kingdom is not necessary. All this means is that when Jesus returns in His kingdom those who are not believers will be cast out. Saucy says, "This [Matt 13:40–43] does not suggest that the righteous are presently in some inaugurated kingdom on earth but not "shining." The wheat and the weeds are growing in the same field—that is, the world, which is never identified as the kingdom. Furthermore, as we have seen, the weeds are cast out of the kingdom, but this is only with its coming at the end of the age with the return of Christ. They

could not be said to be “in the kingdom” today.”¹⁰ All those who are **stumbling blocks** are those who cause others to stumble over the Messiah who is a rock of offense. All **those who commit lawlessness** are those who follow them in rejection and therefore plunge into **lawlessness**. Together they constitute all unbelievers in the future Tribulation. It will be quite clear who unbelievers are at that time because they will become lawless. Jesus says consequently they will be **thrown into the furnace of fire**. This harmonizes well with the goats in Matt 25:41 who are told to “depart...into the eternal fire.” The eternal fire and the furnace of fire are one and the same place. In this place Jesus says there **will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**. Jesus also said in Matt 8:12 that in the outer darkness there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**. Since it is hard to imagine that there are two separate places of **weeping and gnashing of teeth** both **the furnace of fire**, the eternal fire and the outer darkness are all the same place.¹¹ The expression **weeping and gnashing of teeth** refers to the severe anguish that one will face as punishment for spurning the free gift of righteousness available in the Messiah. No believer will ever face weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In verse 43 Jesus then refers to the good seed only, the wheat that will be gathered into His barn which signifies His kingdom. He quotes from the OT. Where does He quote from? Daniel 12:3. **Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER**. What’s the context of Daniel 12:3? During the last half of the Tribulation the whole world will turn against Israel and she will have her roughest years ever. Michael the archangel will be commissioned to protect believing Israel during this time and when it has passed what Jesus is saying is that the righteous of all Israel will enter into the kingdom. Jesus’ main point is that Daniel 12:3 refers to the righteous entering into the kingdom and shining brightly.

That’s the parable of the tares. What is the point of Jesus in this parable? It is to say that in light of Israel’s rejection there is going to be an intervening age during which He as the Son of Man is sowing sons of the kingdom in the world while Satan is sowing sons of evil right alongside of them. The two will be allowed to grow together for a time undistinguishable from one another until the end of the age when Jesus will send forth His angels to gather out all the sons of evil so that the sons of the kingdom can enter His kingdom and shine in righteousness.¹²

Now that we have expounded the passage there are two important theological errors we want to point out and one objection to our theology that we want to address. The first theological error we want to point out is that this parable is not consistent with amillennialism. What’s amillennialism? Walvoord says, “It’s most general character is that of denial of a *literal* reign of Christ upon the earth. Satan is conceived as bound at the first coming of Christ. The present age between the first and second comings is the fulfillment of the millennium. Its adherents are divided on whether the millennium is being fulfilled now on the earth (Augustine) or whether it is being fulfilled by the saints in heaven (Kliefohn). It may be summed up in the idea that there will be no more millennium than there is now, and that the eternal state immediately follows the second coming of Christ.”¹³ What difficulty does this parable pose for amillennialism? Note in 13:38-39 that the tares are the sons of the evil

one and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. How can this be if amillennialist's conceive of Satan as bound at the first coming of Christ? If Satan is bound then he cannot be an active enemy of Christ sowing sons of evil. Further, 2 Cor 4:4 says that Satan is blinding the minds of the unbelieving so that they don't believe. How can he be doing that if he is bound? Further, 1 Pet 5:8 says that during this present age the devil is not bound but actively prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. How can he be doing this if, as amillennialism teaches, he is bound? It seems quite apparent that Satan is not bound. As some have said, if Satan is bound he must be on a very long leash. Thus, the parable is difficult to harmonize with amillennialism.

The second theological error we want to point out is that this parable is not consistent with postmillennialism. What is postmillennialism? Postmillennialism says that the millennial kingdom was established by Christ at His first coming. Through the present church age the gospel will triumph bringing in a golden age of righteousness, peace and prosperity that could last for hundreds, even thousands of years. After the golden age Jesus will literally return to earth for a general resurrection and judgment. The eternal state will immediately follow.¹⁴ What difficulty does the parable pose for postmillennialism? Note in 13:38-43 there is no indication that the preaching of the gospel by the sons of the kingdom will gradually triumph so that the number of the sons of the kingdom will eventually outnumber the sons of the evil and fill the whole world. Instead, the picture is that both the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one will continue to grow alongside one another until the end of the age when Christ sends His angels to judge the sons of evil by removing them and only then does He return to establish His kingdom. **He who has ears, let him hear.**

Premillennialism faces neither of these difficulties with this parable. What is premillennialism? Premillennialism views the present age as ending in a Tribulation characterized by sudden catastrophe of judgment upon the wicked. Then Christ will return and rescue the righteous, raising the believing dead of the Tribulation and Israel and then reigning in a theocratic kingdom of righteousness, peace and tranquility from the throne of David over the whole earth, fulfilling the original dominion mandate for 1,000 years. There is nothing in the parable that is opposed to premillennialism. It is in exact harmony with the parable and that is why we hold premillennialism to be a veritable teaching of Scripture.

Finally, the one objection to our theology that we want to address is the argument that the rapture could not be pre-tribulational in this parable but must be post-tribulational since the harvest is at the end when Christ returns at the Second Advent. What is our answer to this? First, if this is teaching a post-trib rapture then the order is wrong. Note in verse 30 that the landowner says, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn." The order is unbelievers first and then believers. But the post-trib rapture view teaches that the believers are raptured first so they will be out of the way of the wrath and then the unbelievers are judged. The order is wrong. Second, actually the parable doesn't teach anything about a rapture. The rapture teaches that believers will be taken up in the sky to meet Christ in the clouds. This parable does not mention anything like that. It mentions in verse 30 and 43 that the believers who are alive at the Second Advent

will be gathered into the kingdom. Third, the rapture is not in view because it is a truth that relates to the Church and the Church was not revealed until later in Matt 16:18. It is difficult to imagine that a truth unique to the Church would be revealed before the Church itself. Fourth, the parable is about the span of time between the rejection of Israel and the reception of Israel. It is therefore inclusive of the Church but extends on either end beyond the Church. For this reason it does not include any reference to the rapture. As Toussaint says, "...the rapture of the church is included in the time span of the parable but is not spoken of as a separate detail."¹⁵

What's the bottom line of the parable? The bottom line is that from the parable we should predict a certain course of history to take place. We should predict a sowing of sons of the kingdom alongside a sowing of the sons of evil in our world. This prediction is exactly what we have seen for the last 1,982 years. What does this do for us? It gives us confidence that what we do not yet see will take place. What do we not yet see? The harvest at the end of the age when His angels separate the righteous from the wicked and Christ gathers the righteous into His kingdom to reign with Him forevermore. This is something we can rest assured will come to pass as we continue to faith-rest in the promises of God.

¹ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 181.

² J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 214.

³ Mike Stallard, *Hermeneutics and Matthew 13, Part II: Exegetical Conclusions*, paper delivered at Conservative Theological Society, August 2001, p 12.

⁴ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, note on Matt 13:24.

⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 589.

⁶ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 126.

⁷ Cf Rom 11:12, 15.

⁸ Joseph Dillow, *Final Destiny*, p 776.

⁹ Mike Stallard, *Hermeneutics and Matthew 13, Part II: Exegetical Conclusions*, paper delivered at Conservative Theological Society, August 2001, p 17.

¹⁰ Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, pp 100–01 quoted by Michael Vlach, *The Kingdom Program in Matthew's Gospel*, 2009 Pre-Trib Conference, p 13.

¹¹ This author holds contrary to Dillow and others that no believer can undergo weeping and gnashing of teeth as a punitive damage at the judgment seat of Christ.

¹² Additionally, Dr. Andy Woods thought that "...it will be difficult to distinguish between the saved and unsaved within professing Christendom throughout the mystery age. The separation between the saved and the unsaved will not be made until the Second Advent (13:24-30, 36-43)." Andy Woods, *Introduction to the Book of Matthew*, p 45-6. This point is made on the basis of the idea that the wheat and tares are indistinguishable right up until the end near harvest. This may be true from the standpoint of men. It is often difficult to tell the difference between the saved and the unsaved. However, during the Tribulation time the difference will be clear because the unsaved will take the mark of the beast and the saved will not. It will then be clear from the standpoint of men who the saved and unsaved are. However, the parable also indicates that the servants did notice the difference between the two before the time of harvest and requested to remove them. This observation may count against Dr. Woods thought but this author still considers it a possibility.

¹³ John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, p 6.

¹⁴ These parts of the definition are not exhaustive but have been taken from postmillennialist Kenneth L. Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, p 72-74.

¹⁵ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 181.