



# The Harvest and the End of the Age

The Resurrection of the Just and the Unjust Part 6

# Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

- The parable of the wheat and tares is a very popular text used to defend a future judgement at the end of time – something that is never talked about in the Bible.
- This comes from a misunderstanding of some key words, phrases, and themes used within this parable and the explanation given by Jesus.
- In fact, the preaching of John the Baptist is often overlooked when individuals begin to exegete this text.
- In this lesson, we will research the background of this parable and demonstrate how it was a theme that Jesus often talked about.

# The Biblical Background for the Harvest

- The Jewish festal calendar centered around the harvest: “the early rains and the latter rains” (Hosea 6:3; James 5:7).
- In the prophets, several prophecies were made concerning the harvest at the end of the Jewish Age to establish the New Covenant at the marriage of Christ and His bride.
- Some of those texts are Hosea 1:11; 2:21-23; 6:11.
- The main text that we will consider is Malachi 4:1.

# The Harvest in Malachi

- The messenger (John the Baptist: Mark 1:2-3) would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord in judgement to purify the priesthood – not to be born in a manger.
- Also called Elijah (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 17:11-12), John the Baptist would come to prepare the people for the day in which the chaff would be burned: the great and terrible day of the Lord! (Malachi 4:1, 5).
- This is one of the prophecies behind the harvest imagery of the NT.

# Malachi and Matthew 3

- John the Baptist came preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” Why was he preaching a message of repentance? Consider that consistently throughout the Old Testament, the coming of the kingdom was connected to judgement (Daniel 7:9-10, 27).
- It is no wonder that the parable of the wheat and tares is a parable concerning the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:24).
- This message led to causing the Pharisees and the Sadducees to repent.

## Thought Question

If John was preaching a judgement at an end of time resurrection far distant in his future, why would the Sadducees repent since they do not believe in the spirit or in resurrection?



# Malachi and Matthew 3

- John, referencing Malachi 4, said that the axe was already laid to the root of the tree! The great and terrible day of the Lord was right around the corner.
- John also said that Jesus' winnowing fork was in His hand. He would gather the wheat into the barn and burn the chaff – referencing Malachi 4 again!
- Dr. Craig S. Keener, concerning Matthew 3:13, explains, “Winnowing was familiar to all Palestinian Jews, especially to the farmers: they would throw harvested wheat into the air, and the wind would separate the heavier grain from the lighter chaff. The chaff was useless for consumption and was normally burned.”

# Revelation 14 and the Harvest

- Revelation 14 is about the time when one sitting on a cloud like a son of man would reap the earth at the appropriate hour.
- This harvest takes place at the fall of Babylon – the city where the Lord was slain: Revelation 11:8.
- John the Baptist said that his message would be fulfilled in a time that could be described as “at hand.” John, who saw the apocalypse, likewise said that his book, including the harvest of Revelation 14, was at hand and would shortly come to pass (Revelation 1:1, 3).

# Matthew 13 and the Harvest

- Before we move on to the next subject, we will quickly point out some important truths about Matthew 13.
- This would be time of the burning of the chaff and the gathering of the righteous into the barn – Matthew 13:30.
- This would take place at the “end of the age” in which Jesus was living (Matthew 13:39-40).
- This would take place when “the righteous will shine forth as the sun.” This is a reference to Daniel 12:3 – a passage concerning the resurrection of the just and the unjust!

# The End of the Age

## συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος

- Jesus said in Matthew 13:39-40 that the harvest is “the end of the age.”
- But what is the end of the age?
- In the Maps and Charts section of the IVP Biblical Background Commentary of the New Testament, Dr. Craig S. Keener demonstrates that Jewish eschatology is composed of two ages: “this age” and the “age to come.”
- Since the Christian age has no end, the only age that Jesus could have had in sight was the end of the age in which He was living: Galatians 4:4.

# The End of the Age

## ΣΥΝΤΕΛΕΪΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΙΩΝΟΣ

- When Jesus finished His parables of the kingdom of God and the end of the age, He asked His disciples if they understood what He taught, and they answered in the affirmative (Matthew 13:51).
- They understood that He was telling them about the end of the Jewish age in which they were living.
- This is why in Matthew 24, when Jesus told His disciples about the fall of the temple, they asked Him for one sign that would mark both the end of the age and His parousia (Matthew 24:3).
- This end of the age (which is the time of the harvest) would come within their generation (Matthew 24:14-15; 34).

# The End of the Age

## συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος

- Matthew 24, like Matthew 13, is also discussing the gathering of the saints (Matthew 24:29-31).
- This gathering, again like Matthew 13, would take place at the coming of Christ in judgement.
- However, the coming of Christ in power and great glory would be within that generation at the end of the age (Matthew 24:34).

# The End of the Age

## συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος

- Not only was Jesus discussing the same subject matter in Matthew 24 that He was discussing in Matthew 13, but He also used similar imagery.
- In Matthew 25:31ff, we find the imagery of the sheep and the goats. This is parallel to the parable of the wheat and the tares of Matthew 13. This takes place at the time when Jesus would come in power and glory (see Matthew 24:30)
- Matthew 25:31ff is discussing the time when the saints would inherit the kingdom at the time of the judgement. This is a theme we have already discussed, but it is interesting that this is also a common thread in Daniel (e.g. Daniel 12:13).