

The Tares Will Always Be with Us

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Given on December 19, 2009

As we all know, there are converted Brethren in all groups where God's people meet all around the world. They are converted; they have God's holy spirit; they are motivated by God and we know that God is working with all of those that He has called. Whether it's in South America or Russia or here in North America, God has called many. He has caused many to be baptized. He has given them the gift of His holy spirit and He is working through them and with them.

But God has allowed another category of people to attend and be amongst His people. And He has a name for them and Christ gave a very specific parable about this group of people that is interspersed and attends with God's true people. And let's understand that the parable we're about to read is not only a parable describing the situation, but it is also a prophecy. And it's a specific prophecy about today at the end of the age. So with that in mind, let's go to Matthew chapter 13. If you have a ribbon in your Bible or a marker, you probably want to put it there because we'll be coming back to Matthew 13 and then referencing other Scriptures in relation to Matthew 13. We'll begin in verse 24 and we're going to read the parable and then make some comments by way of introduction. Matthew 13 we're going to read verses 24-30:

Matthew 13:24: *Another parable put he [before] them, [and he said], The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: (KJV)*

"The Kingdom of heaven is like." Anytime God says that we should pay attention because our goal is to be in the Kingdom of Heaven and if He says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like" then we should pay attention to that. And He said, "It's like unto a man which sowed good seed into his field."

Verse 25:

Matthew 13:25-27. *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and [then he] went his way.
26) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also [at the same time].
27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, [didn't you] sow good seed in [your] field? (KJV)*

"And why are these tares here if you sowed good seed in the field?" they're asking. (Matthew 13:27b paraphrased.)

Verse 28:

Matthew 13:28-29. *He said unto them, An enemy has done this. The servants said unto him, Do you want us to go and gather up the tares? 29) But he said, No; lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them. (KJV)*

So He was giving them a caution. Then He gave them instruction in verse 30.

Matthew 13:30. *Let both grow together until the harvest: and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather you together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat and put them in my barn. (KJV)*

What we're going to do is examine this parable to see what lessons God wants us to learn from it. If you want to put a title on this sermon, it is called *The Tares Will Always Be With Us*. As we're going to find out *The Tares Will Always Be With Us*.

Now let's look at the explanation that Christ gave for this parable, because He didn't just throw it out there and walk away and then ask us to interpret it according to human wisdom. Look at verse 36 of Matthew 13.

Matthew 13:36. *Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, (KJV)*

Now He is giving the explanation to His disciples, not to anybody else. He said—they were asking:

Matthew 13:36b. *saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*

We want to know what the answer is. We want to know what the symbolism is.

Verse 37:

Matthew 13:37. *He answered and said unto them, He that [sows] the good seed is the Son of man [referring to Himself]; (KJV)*

So the one thing we want to gather or glean from verse 37 is that Christ does the sowing. Not the Church, not a man, not an organization, Christ does the sowing.

Verse 38:

Matthew 13:38. *The field is the world; (KJV)*

It's the world that the workers live in. We know in 1 John 2 and verse 15—what does that tell us? It says:

1 John 2:15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (KJV)*

So Christ is setting the stage and saying, "This field—I'm drawing an analogy—this field is like the world." Verse 38 continuing on:

Matthew 13:38b. *But the good seed are the children of the kingdom; (KJV)*

Children! And they are young; they are new. Look at Matthew 18 and verse 3. What did Christ say about children and the Kingdom? Now obviously Christ is giving us this parable, but He also mentioned in Matthew 18 and verse 3 the following about children relative to the Kingdom. Christ said—Matthew 18 and verse 3:

Matthew 18:3. *And said, Truly I say unto you, Except you be converted, (KJV)*

We've talked about that recently—changed from one state to another state.

Matthew 18:3b. *and become as little children, (KJV)*

Meaning in mind, in spirit, in attitude!

Matthew 18:3 cont. *you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)*

So in verse 38, He says, "The good seed are these little children." As we've talked about it before, all of us are little children to God. I don't care if we're a hundred years old we're little kids. We're God's kids. He's our Father; He's our Daddy and we have that relationship with Him. So verse 38 tells us clearly that the good seed are the children of the Kingdom. But He goes on to say:

Matthew 18:3 cont. *but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (KJV)*

So we have God and Christ and Their children and then we have the wicked one and his children. Let's turn over to John 8 and verse 44 and Christ was talking to a group of men, He said, "You are the children of the Devil." So we can clearly see who He's referring to here in verse 38 by looking at John 8 and verse 44.

We won't go through this whole account, but in verse 1, He's obviously talking to the scribes and the Pharisees. So in verse 44, He's carrying on; He says:

John 8:44. *You [referring to the scribes and Pharisees] are of your father the devil, (KJV)*

They are his children!

John 8:44b. *and the lusts of your father you will do. (KJV)*

Well, if you follow in your father's footsteps, obviously you are children, then, of the wicked one referring to verse 38 that we just read. Going on in John 8 and verse 44, He said:

John 8:44b. *He [meaning the father of these children] was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaks of his own: (KJV)*

The Greek means literally "from his own will." He's doing it on purpose. He is telling a lie from his own will.

John 8:44 cont. *for he is a liar, and the father of it. (KJV)*

So the tares—Christ is identifying the tares as the children of the wicked one.

Verse 39, going on back in Matthew 13:

Matthew 13:39. *The enemy that sowed them is the devil; (KJV)*

Satan did the sowing and he sowed in the field tares which are his children. We have to understand that.

Let's go to 1 John 3 and verse 8, talking about who did the sowing of the tares. 1 John 3 and verse 8, adding to the fact that Christ is telling us that the enemy is the Devil, the one that did the sowing of the tares. 1 John 3 and verse 8, it says:

1 John 3:8. *He that committs sin is of the devil; for the devil [sinned] from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (KJV)*

And we're going to see as we go through this parable, that indeed the works of the Devil will be destroyed. And the tares, as we're going to see, will be destroyed. So going on in verse 39, the enemy that sowed them is the Devil. Notice the rest of verse 39:

Matthew 13:39b. *the harvest is the end of the world; (KJV)*

Or as the Revised Standard says, "the end of the age."

So this sets now the time frame of this parable. The time setting is indeed the end of the age. So herein lies the prophecy. He's giving us this parable which holds true through the ages since Christ's death, but is specifically for the end of the age because it defines what's going to happen to the wheat, to the tares, but it also tells us what's going to happen in the interim time, especially as we build up to the end of the age.

Going on in verse 39, He says:

Matthew 13:39 cont. *and the reapers are the angels.* (KJV)

They are the ones that come and gather the wheat and they also gather the tares. And we're told—we won't turn there—in Hebrews 1 and verse 14—that the angels are called "ministering spirits." They minister to us. As we know, we have our own angels assigned to us. But they also minister to God and Jesus Christ and they do Their will. Therefore their purpose is to minister for our benefit and to do God's will.

Now let's read verses 40 to 42 because they all go together. Verse 40 says:

Matthew 13:40-41. *As therefore the tares are gathered [by the reapers] and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [or age].*

41) *The Son of man shall send forth his angels [the reapers], and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend,* (KJV)

That's a scary thought!

Matthew 13:41b-42 *all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42) And shall cast them [meaning the tares] into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.* (KJV)

So at the end of the age, coming up to the end of the age, the tares face a certain fate and we do not want to be accounted as a tare. Therefore—we'll get into this later—we have to be very careful about that.

Notice Matthew 7. We're going to read verses 21 through 23. This is referring to the tares. It's referring to those who do not do God's will. Matthew 7 verse 21:

Matthew 7:21 *Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;* (KJV)

That again is a scary thought!

Matthew 7:21b *but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.* (KJV)

Those doing God's will will be spared and will be given eternal life. Verse 22:

Matthew 7:22 Many (KJV)

It says. Not a few, but

Matthew 7:22 Many *will say to me in that day,* (KJV)

They will say to Christ:

Matthew 7:22b *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in [your] name? Have we not cast out demons in your name? (KJV paraphrased)*

That has happened down through the millennia.

Matthew 7:22 cont. *and in your name haven't we done many wonderful works? (KJV)*

Christ is not denying that some of these tares did these works or prophesied or cast out demons. Verse 23, notice Christ's response:

Matthew 7:23 *And then will I profess to you, I never knew you: (KJV)*

He didn't say, "I knew you once but I've forgotten." He said, "I never knew you." Now I remember coming into the Church I wondered what He meant by that. These are the people who prophesied or allegedly cast out demons, who did wonderful works. He says, "I never knew you" because they were tares planted by the evil one. And, of course, He wouldn't know the tares. He wouldn't recognize the tares because they were planted by the evil one. They were never called. They were never converted. And they were interspersed among God's people. And He says to them at the end of the age, at the end of the time, He says, "I never knew you." So again that's something that we need to be very careful about.

So Christ gave us the explanation of the parable. He gave us the parable for a purpose. So it seems logical then that we should ask ourselves, "What lessons does He want us to learn from this parable?" He wouldn't give it for no reason. He wouldn't give us an explanation for no reason. So obviously it is there for a purpose. And we, to be conscientious about God's Word, would have to ask ourselves, "What is it that He wants us to learn about this parable? What lessons does He want us to take away from the parable and apply to ourselves? And what lessons are there to help us become the Bride of Christ?"

Okay, we're going to have several. One, Point Number One:

The tares are planted by the enemy. We know that. Christ explained that. So Point Number One, We need to identify who is our enemy and what is his purpose in sowing the tares and putting the tares in the Church? What is the purpose? Notice in verse 25 back in Matthew 13:

Matthew 13:25 *But while men slept, (KJV)*

So while the community was asleep, so to speak, the other workers in the field—the angels even—He says:

Matthew 13:25. *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. (KJV)*

So we see here that it was done in secret. It was not apparent when the tares were sown. It wasn't apparent in the parable to the workers in the field because all of a sudden the tares started springing up. And remember they asked Christ, "Well, didn't you buy good seed?" thinking that maybe the tares were intermingled with the good seed; the seed of the tares was somehow intermingled with the seed of the wheat. He said, "No. They've been planted there. I know that. And they've been planted there by an enemy."

Well we know that in Revelation—we won't turn there—Revelation 12 verse 10—we know that by heart—that Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. And we know in 1 Peter 5:8, he is called our adversary, the devil. He's a roaring lion seeking whom he may destroy. So we understand who did the planting. And we understand that that being is the enemy of the wheat, the enemy of God's people. And he is sowing the tares for a very specific purpose.

Let's go to John 10 and verse 10. This is the Parable of the Sheepfold. We're just going to look at one verse. Christ is the Chief Shepherd. Christ is also the door to the sheepfold. But He also gave us a warning that thieves will try to get into the sheepfold and do certain things. In John 10 and verse 10, He tells us what their motivation is, what they want to accomplish. He says:

John 10:10. The thief [when he comes into the sheepfold] [comes] not, but to steal [the wheat, God's people], and to kill [the wheat, God's people], and to destroy [ultimately permanently God's people]: (KJV)

Then Christ, our Chief Shepherd, gives the contrast here. He says:

John 10:10b. I am come [not to kill, or steal, or destroy. He said I am come] that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. (KJV)

So we see the contrast here between the owner of the field, who planted and raised a crop and wanted to harvest it because it bore fruit, and the enemy, the devil, the adversary, he wants to sow tares that do the following: steal, kill, and destroy.

So with that in mind, we, as God's people, have to understand that we have a struggle ahead of us. I mean we know that. Look at what's happened in the last few years. We understand there's a struggle. We understand there are spiritual forces that are trying to destroy us and God's people all over the world.

Let's go to Ephesians 6 and verse 12. I'm going to read that out of the NIV, but it makes it very clear that our struggle is not a physical struggle. Yes, we have our physical trials. Yes, we have job problems and health problems, but ultimately our main struggle is not a physical one. Ephesians 6 and verse 12 out of the NIV:

Ephesians 6:12. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, (NIV)

Let's understand that.

Ephesians 6:12b. but against [our struggle is against] the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world [meaning behind this dark world] and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (NIV)

And we have many, many trials in this life. We've mentioned Greg Gaetzman's trial on his job. Well, yes, it's a physical trial, but there are forces behind that that are working behind the scenes to try to affect Mr. Gaetzman. And we've all had trials on our jobs. We've had health trials. We've had interpersonal trials. We've had all kinds of situations that God has allowed to test us, but the motivation, the force behind it is this evil one—spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms to try to get us discouraged, to get us upset, to try to force us to bring forth fruits of the flesh and not fruits of the spirit.

So we see here in Point Number One:

- The tares are planted by the enemy.
- We know who our enemy is.
- And the purpose of the enemy is to steal, and to kill, and to destroy God's people.

Now let's go to the Second Point, the second lesson we can learn.

The tares were planted when men slept. That means the tares were planted in secret. Verse 25:

Matthew 13:25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (KJV)

So they were planted in secret. Therefore, they are not apparent to humans. When they were sown, sometimes as the tares grow up, it's not obvious that they're tares because they were sown in secret. We didn't see Satan come down and plop somebody into God's Church. That would be obvious. So it's obvious then that if they were sown in secret, the tares come into the Church much as the same as the rest of God's people. They come into the Church in that sense secretly without awareness of the rest.

Let's go to Galatians 2 and verse 4. The New Testament apostles, particularly Paul, had very much to say about these tares, those coming in secretly. Galatians 2 and verse 4:

Galatians 2:4: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, (KJV)

Who brought them in? Well, the great deceiver, our adversary. They were false brethren brought in unawares. It wasn't apparent.

Galatians 2:4b. who came in [privately] to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: (KJV)

The implication is bondage to sin because we're told elsewhere in the New Testament that whoever we obey, we're a slave of whom we obey. So we see here that false brethren came in unawares to the rest of God's people that they might bring us into bondage to sin.

The Greek word for *unawares* is Strong's 3920 and it means secretly brought in or one who has stolen in—come in unawares without the knowledge of the others.

No one was aware when the tares were first planted. And, of course, they have been planted into the Church ever since the Church was formed, ever since that first century. They have been planted every century, every year, every decade, every millennium since that time.

Let's go to Jude and verse 4. We see here another reference to those coming in unaware. Jude verse 4, (right before the book of Revelation), notice what it says!

Jude 1:4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)

So we see that they came in unawares to influence people to break God's Law, to influence people to lust, and to influence people to deny Jesus Christ.

And again this word *unawares* is very much related to the one that we just read in Galatians 2 and verse 4. In Galatians 2:4, it was Strong's 3920. This one is Strong's 3921 and it means to enter secretly, to slip in stealthily, or to steal in.

They came in unawares while men slept! And we see here that they want to get God's people off the track. That is the motivation behind the tares. It's a spiritual force motivating the tares.

And during the heyday of the Worldwide Church of God, as an example in the 1960's and the 1970's, many were planted in the Church in those days. Ministers, members in those days planted in the Church in the 1960's and 1970's, who would later cause severe disruption in the Church before Mr. Armstrong's and after Mr. Armstrong's death. They were planted decades before. And they came up in the Church; some in the highest possible positions as we know, that would teach men and women to break God's Law, to deny Jesus Christ. We've been through all of that. But what God is telling us is that they were tares planted secretly. They grew up along with the wheat

year after year after year and then finally came to fruition, some before Mr. Armstrong's death, some subsequent after Mr. Armstrong's death.

But the point here in Number Two is that they were planted in secret. It was not apparent when they came in the Church. It's not apparent even while the plants were growing, so to speak.

That leads us to the Third Point—the third lesson that we need to learn.

Tares are interspersed among God's people. Just as the wheat began to grow, the tares began to grow. And they grew side by side. They were intermingled together. In verse 29, notice what Christ said. He said, "No," when they said "Should we gather the tares right now?"

Matthew 13:29. But he said, [No]; lest while [you] gather up the tares, [you] root up also the wheat with them. (KJV)

The indication being it's hard to tell as they're growing; sometimes it's hard to tell one from the other. So you might pull up some wheat in trying to take care of the tares and rid the field of the tares.

Now the Greek word for *tare* is Strong's 2215. And it's a Greek word *zizanion*. And it means a kind of darnel. Now darnel is a type of grass. It's in the same—if my biology is right—the phylum. I think it's the same phylum as grass. So the Greek word for *tares*: it's a kind of darnel resembling wheat except the grains are black.

So what we're being told is when the plants are growing, they look very close, very similar, but when it gets to where it begins to bear fruit, the fruit of the tares looks different, is different than the fruit of the wheat. But until you get to the fruit-bearing stage, they look very much the same.

Very important spiritual lessons on that concept! Look at Matthew 7 and verse 15. Christ, in His very first sermon, warned His people that certain situations like this, circumstances like this would indeed happen. Matthew 7 and verse 15, He said:

Matthew 7:15. Beware (KJV)

That means be careful, take note of, watch out for:

Matthew 7:15b. false prophets, (KJV)

Not true prophets but false prophets. But notice He said, "You have to be especially aware because:

Matthew 7.15 cont. [they] come to you in sheep's clothing, (KJV)

Well, Christ said He is the Shepherd; we are the sheep. And if false prophets come in, they don't just march in saying, "I'm a false prophet. Look at me." They come in looking like the sheep! They're wearing sheep's clothing. So what Christ is warning us is that there are going to be false brethren, there are going to be tares, but, they look just like everybody else. Their appearance, maybe even their demeanor in certain circumstances, is very similar to the average Church member or, frankly, to the average minister. False brethren in the Church resemble faithful Brethren. False ministers in the Church resemble faithful ministers just as the tares resembled the wheat as they were intermingled together, growing up together in the field.

Now there are tares in every group, every *corporation*—I hate to use that word. But where God's people meet all over the earth, I'll tell you, tares are there. Why? Because Satan doesn't give one group a pass and then go after another group. Satan wants to destroy all of God's people. Therefore, Satan plants tares wherever God's people are. And we have to be very careful of that.

For somebody to stand up and say, "Well, this group, my corporation, my group we don't have any tares. We're only God's true people." that's not what the Bible says. And Satan would not allow that to happen because He wants to kill and to steal and to destroy every one of God's people. I don't care if they're in North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Alaska. It doesn't make any difference. He wants to destroy God's people. Therefore, he is going to plant tares wherever God's people come together---irrespective of corporations, irrespective of labels and all of that—because Satan wants to kill, to steal and to destroy.

Now the logical question is: Well, how do I know? How do I identify a tare? Well, we'll get to that in a little bit.

So the Third Point is: Tares are interspersed among God's people.

The Fourth Point:

This is the title of the Sermon: *Tares Will Be With Us Until the Very End.*

Why would Satan give the end generation of the Church a pass on sowing tares? Why would he do that? Well, obviously he's not. As time gets closer to the end, when he comes down, when the bands of restraint are loosened from him, it's going to get worse; it's not going to get better.

And it's my belief—and this is just a personal belief. In the past couple of years, it seems to me that God has reduced His restraint on Satan by a considerable amount. Satan is more active in the minds and hearts of God's people than he's ever been. There's more pressure on God's people than has ever occurred in the past. And it just seems like Satan is more active now than he was a year ago or two years ago or three years ago. And the point is that Satan is not going to let up on this last generation of

God's people. He is going to sow tares and has sown tares among God's people and they will be with us until the very end.

Verse 30 of Matthew 13, remember Christ said:

Matthew 13:30: Let both grow together until the harvest: (KJV)

Well, that's obviously a prophecy for the end. The harvest is soon. We don't know exactly when, but it's got to be very soon.

And He said in verse 39 that:

Matthew 13:39b. the harvest is the end of the [age; the end of the] world; (KJV)

And so the tares are going to be with us right until the very end!

And understand that wheat and tares planted in a field, as darnel planted in a field, what do they both do? They both struggle for water, and they both struggle for sunlight. They're competing for water and sunlight and they grow together.

And, therefore, God's elect, the wheat, must struggle with those who are there as tares because those tares want to lead the wheat, God's people, astray. They want to keep God's holy spirit, which we know is symbolized in part by water. They want to dry up God's people. They want to dry up the wheat. They want to block the sunlight. They want to destroy God's people. Tares are there to try and test the wheat.

You've seen trees that for example—I'll draw a different analogy—trees that are in a forest. And one of them gets more sunlight than the other. They're struggling for the sunlight. And the one that gets the most sunlight grows strong and is taller and bigger around. And this little weak one over here is shriveling up because it can't get to the sun.

And so the tares want to keep God's people away from water, away from sun, away from nourishment, get us all sidetracked on stuff that's irrelevant. So that we aren't fed; we aren't nourished properly. They're going to be with us to the very end.

Look at 2 Peter chapter 2. We're going to read the first three verses and then jump to verse 10 and read through verse 19. This is a prophecy too! Just like the Parable of the Tares is a prophecy. 2 Peter 2 verse 1, he says:

2 Peter 2:1. But there were (KJV)

This was in the past. Remember he is talking now going back into the days of ancient Israel, back all the way, back to the very beginning.

2 Peter 2:1. But there were false prophets also among the people [Tares!], even as there [Now he's prophesying.] shall be false teachers among you [looking into the future], [Notice!] who [privately] (KJV)

What? The tares were planted secretly. Remember that? He says here now, privately, stealthily:

2 Peter 2:1b. shall bring in damnable heresies, (KJV)

Now we've seen that. The breakup of Worldwide, we saw that!

2 Peter 2:1 cont. damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, (KJV)

And the heresy now is:

- Christ is a created being.
- Christ is not at the same level of God the Father.
- Christ is not eternal.

To me that's "denying the Lord that bought them."

2 Peter 2:1 cont. and [shall] bring upon themselves swift destruction. (KJV)

At the time the tares are gathered together and we know that they're going to be thrown into the fire.

Verse 2:

2 Peter 2:2. And many (KJV)

Not a few!

2 Peter 2:2. And many shall follow their pernicious (KJV)

The King James says. The Greek means *lasciviousness*, which is license to sin.

2 Peter 2:2. And many shall follow [we could say] their [lawless] ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (KJV)

And we have seen those in God's Church down through the decades. Leaders, who were caught in a massage parlor years ago, does that bring the Church into ill repute? Of course, it does. A minister I knew of in Texas that was flying drugs across the border: find out that that's somebody from the Worldwide Church of God bring the Church into disrepute? Of course!

Verse 3:

2 Peter 2:3. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words (KJV)

Feigned means fake, not sincere, not pure.

2 Peter 2:3b. with feigned words make merchandise of you: (KJV)

Disrupt God's people, destroy God's people.

2 Peter 2:3 cont. whose judgment now of a long time [lingers] not, and their damnation [slumbers] not. (KJV)

They're going to get their reward in due course. God is not mocked. God is not going to wink at them. They're going to get their reward in due course.

Jumping to verse 10:

2 Peter 2:10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. (KJV)

Now the Greek for *government* means one who possesses dominion.

The New International says *authority*. "They despise authority."

Nobody's going to tell them what to do. Remember the chief characteristic of a Laodicean is "I have need of nothing. I already know what to do. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. Nobody's going to correct me. I don't need that."

So Peter is telling us here that those tares at the end of the age are going to be lustful and unclean and despise authority.

Going on:

2 Peter 2:10b. Presumptuous *are they*, (KJV)

Meaning to presume to do things that are not theirs to do.

Notice this word:

2 Peter 2:10 cont. selfwilled, (KJV)

The tares want their own way. That's selfishness, but they want their own way. "It's my way or the highway! You will do it my way, or I'm out of here! Or I'm going to influence others to follow me."

2 Peter 2:10 cont. they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. (KJV)

Now the King James says *dignities*; the Greek means *government* or dominion. So if they speak evil of those who have some authority in the Church or speak evil of government, what are they doing? They're causing division. Aren't they? It's very clear what God says to do with those who cause division.

Verse 11:

2 Peter 2:11. Whereas angels, (KJV)

Unlike these tares that we're talking about.

2 Peter 2:11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, [don't] bring railing [accusations] against them before the [Eternal]. (KJV)

They don't dare speak evil of government. They don't dare speak evil of those in authority. But these human beings do. The tares do.

Verse 12:

2 Peter 2:12. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, (KJV)

He's referring to the tares now.

2 Peter 2:12b. speak evil of the things that they [don't even] understand; (KJV)

They gossip without knowing the truth! They say things based on rumor and speculation.

2 Peter 2:12 cont. and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; (KJV)

And we know where the tares are going to be thrown—the lake of fire.

Verse 13:

2 Peter 2:13. And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings [Notice this!] while they feast with you; (KJV)

So remember the tares are in the same field as the wheat. They're interspersed, intermingled with the wheat. And we're told here they are at the Feasts; they're at the Holy Days; they're at Sabbath Services. Tares are interspersed among God's people.

Verse 14:

2 Peter 2:14. Having eyes full of adultery, (KJV)

Now that can refer to physical adultery, but it can also refer to spiritual adultery. In other Scriptures we're told that some get drawn astray by having itching ears, wanting to hear something new, wanting to hear something contrary to the teachings of the Church. So you can commit spiritual adultery just as easy as physical adultery.

2 Peter 2:14b. and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: (KJV)

Those who are unstable, those who don't have a foundation, those who have not built their faith on a Rock and so that's why we all need to be very careful that we're not unstable and easily influenced by tares.

It says:

2 Peter 2:14 cont. [a] heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: (KJV)

These are not kind words that Peter's coming out with. You don't want to be on the receiving end of what Peter's talking about.

Verse 15:

2 Peter 2:15. Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16) But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb [donkey] speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. (KJV)

We don't want to be in Balaam's case, in his situation.

Verse 17:

2 Peter 2:17. These are wells without water, (KJV)

Now water is a symbol of God's holy spirit. A well is a repository of water. Just like the human body is a repository of God's holy spirit. We're being told they don't have God's Spirit. Christ, remember, said, "I never knew you." They've never had God's holy spirit.

2 Peter 2:17b. wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever [for these]. (KJV)

Verse 18:

2 Peter 2:18. For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much wantonness*, (KJV)

That means evil desire.

2 Peter 2:18b. those that were clean (KJV)

The Greek means *clean for a while*.

2 Peter 2:18 cont. clean escaped from them who live in error. (KJV)

So, for a while, some wheat was not influenced by the tares. They were clean escaped for a time—for a while, as the Greek implies.

Verse 19:

2 Peter 2:19. While they promise them liberty, (KJV)

That is the tares promise the wheat liberty.

2 Peter 2:19b. they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. (KJV)

Just like the other warnings we've heard that what the tares are motivated to do by Satan is to bring God's people into bondage to sin. "Oh, it's okay to compromise. It's okay to not keep the Sabbath. It's okay to compromise on the Holy Days. It's okay to watch this or read that. It's okay to return evil with evil. Well, they did that to you, get back to them." You see the tares influence God's people to get away from God, to not follow God and eventually shrivel up and die because they then turn over God's holy spirit.

Therefore, we should not be astonished if and when we find tares in the Church today. The Bible is clear. The tares are among God's people, have been from the beginning, and are so today. So we shouldn't be astonished at that. They're there for a reason and for a purpose.

So let's ask a question now: Who are the tares? Who are they? We know they don't have God's holy spirit, but we know that they attend Church. They attend the Feasts. Well, you could say in a general group that these tares are in the Church for all the wrong reasons—all the wrong reasons!

God's true people are in the Church because we realize how weak we are. We realize that apart from God we are nothing. We have a temporary physical existence as Mr. Armstrong taught so many times. That without God, we will die. Without God, we will not have eternal life. And as Jeremiah 10 and verse 23 says we don't know how to put

one foot in front of the other. We just don't know. And so we are nothing apart from God.

So, therefore, what we, as God's people, should be doing and want to do and beg to do is to have more of God's holy spirit, more of the mind of Christ that we can be like God the Father and be like Jesus Christ so that He would want to marry us; Christ would want to marry us; God would want to bless that ceremony, so that we can be part of the Family of God. But it can't happen on our own terms. It can't happen on our own strength. It can only happen with the power of God through His holy spirit.

But the tares don't have that motivation. What the tares do or what the tares are like, in some cases, the tares come into the Church for strictly social reasons—just to have fellowship, just to have a potluck after services, just to mingle with God's people. Some are religious hobbyists. They come to Church to espouse their latest hobby thing that they've found, latest doctrinal tweak, latest point of history. They have no desire to change themselves, but they want to present what is interesting to them to other people. Hence, have a little bit of an audience. Some of the tares come into the Church seeking recognition. They want to be aggrandized. They want to be promoted. They want to have a job. They wanted to have a label, so to speak. They want to have a title on their office door, so to speak.

This minister decades ago that was running—on the Sabbath, by the way—flying in his own airplane, drugs from Mexico into Texas on the Sabbath, told a very good friend of mine, he said, "You know I grew up in the Church. And I found out very early," he said. "I looked around and who drove the best car? It was the minister. Who had the best home? It was the minister. Who was looked up to in the congregation more than anybody? Well, it was the minister. So," he said, "I decided to be a minister. Well, how do you get to be a minister? Well, you have to go to Ambassador College. So I worked hard in high school, got my grades up." He sucked up to the ministers there locally, got a recommendation to go to Ambassador College and did.

Then found out, once he was at college, what it took to succeed. Well, you had to make good grades. You had to suck up to the right people. You had to behave in a certain way, dress in a certain way, act in a certain way, and that's exactly what he did. Graduated from college and was sent out into the field and was ordained an elder; then became a pastor without one ounce of God's holy spirit! He was baptized but it never took. It never happened because he never repented. He was in it to seek recognition, to seek aggrandizement, to have a good job and it was all just a physical human effort.

Some in the Church are there, like I said, for the wrong reasons—to seek recognition, to seek aggrandizement. Some come into the Church to seek power, to seek control. They do what it takes to climb the ladder and to seek power in certain areas. We've had people arguing in God's Church over the years about how the kitchen's going to be run. Who's going to be the *boss* of the kitchen? Or who's going to be the boss of the thermostat? Or who's going to be the boss of the audio system? And people get in fights about it!

So you have to ask: What's this person's motivation then? Is it to exhibit the fruits of God's spirit or is it to man the thermostat? To be in charge of the thermostat, you see. What is the motivation? And what I'm saying is that the tares are in the Church for all the wrong reasons. Some are relatively harmless. But others are walking, talking trouble and wherever they go they leave a trail of misery behind them and trouble behind them.

Look at Jude verse 12, Jude verse 12. We read here the discussion is about clouds without water, again those without God's holy spirit. In the book of Jude we are told the following, Jude 12:

Jude 1:12. These are spots in your feasts of [love], (KJV)

Meaning that they're there at the Feasts, but they're spots; they're blemishes.

Jude 1:12b. when they feast with you, (KJV)

So it's very clear the tares are in God's Church. They fellowship with God's people. They rub elbows with God's people. They attend the Sabbath, the Holy Days with God's people.

Jude 1:12 cont. feeding themselves (KJV)

That's selfish. Not there to serve. Not there to give, but:

Jude 1:12 cont. feeding themselves without fear: (KJV)

They're not afraid.

Jude 1:12 cont. clouds *they are* without water, (KJV)

Meaning without God's holy spirit.

Jude 1:12 cont. carried about of winds; trees whose fruit [withers], without fruit, (KJV)

No, don't have the fruit of God's spirit.

Jude 1:12 cont. twice dead, (KJV)

Meaning they're going to die once a physical death and then they're going to die a second time—a permanent death.

Jude 1:12 cont. plucked up by the roots; (KJV)

Isn't that interesting when he says, "plucked up by the roots"? What did we read in Matthew chapter 13? The tares are what? They're pulled up by the roots.

The Greek word for *spots* is the Greek word *spilas*. It's Strong's 4694. It's the only time it's used in the New Testament. And metaphorically, it means "men who by their conduct damage others morally, wreck them as it were" (Thayer's)—to damage and to wreck.

What did Christ say about the thief that steals into the sheepfold? To kill, to steal, and to destroy. So we can see here that the tares are in the Church for all the wrong reasons and they are motivated by an evil motivation. They may not be aware of it. Satan might not possess them. But they're in the Church for the wrong reasons.

Now let's ask another question: Why does God allow the tares to be with His people? Some people say, "Well, God's a loving God, why would He do this? Why would He allow these unconverted people with wrong motivations to rub elbows with His people? Why would He allow them into His Church after all?"

Now remember the tares are put there by Satan to lead God's people astray. Now is God ignorant of this? Was God asleep when this happened? No. God is fully aware of it. He understands and He knows it. He understands it fully. God allows them to stay to the very end in order to challenge His children—God's children—to challenge us to do the right thing, to resist evil, to resist wrong influences. They're there to challenge us to follow God. Are we or are we not?

Look at 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 1. 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 1, this is a prophecy just like Matthew 13 is a prophecy. 1 Timothy 4 and verse 1:

1 Timothy 4:1. Now the Spirit [speaks] expressly, (KJV)

And we know that the truth of God is revealed spiritually.

1 Timothy 4:1. Now the Spirit [speaks] expressly, that in the latter times

These are the latter times!

1 Timothy 4:1b. some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of [demons]; (KJV)

Now the tares are subject to the "doctrines of demons." The tares are subject to the influence of Satan. The tares, then, speak doctrines that don't come from them, but come from Satan. Why? To get God's people to go astray, to apostatize God's people.

The Greek word for *seducing* is the Greek word *planos*. It's Strong's 4108. And it means misleading, or it means leading to error, or it can refer to a corrupter, a deceiver, or an imposter.

And the tares are all of that to lead God's people astray, to lead them into error.

Now God tells us throughout the Bible to pay attention to the company we keep. It's up to us to decide who we fellowship with. It's up to us to decide who we make long-term friends with. I'm not talking acquaintances. And I'm not talking shunning people. Don't get me wrong there. But I'm saying God gives us the freedom to associate with whoever we want. But He also tells us that we're responsible for that. And we're responsible and should pay attention to the company that all of us keep.

Let's go to Proverbs 22 and just read a couple of verses. I'm not referring to this specifically but I'm referring to this in a principle. We've got to be careful of who we associate with. Proverbs 22 and we'll read verses 24 and 25—in verse 24, we're told:

Proverbs 22:24. Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man [you shall] not go: (KJV)

Now in verse 25 we are told why; we're told the principle.

Proverbs 22:25. Lest [you] learn his ways, and get a snare to [your life]. (KJV)

Proverbs 22:25. Lest [you] learn his ways, and get a snare to [your life]. (KJV)

So it means if you associate with somebody that is evil or somebody that is going in the wrong direction or somebody that's really squirrely doctrinally and you get too close to them, over a period of time, God says you might learn his ways or her ways. You have to be careful. That doesn't mean we turn our backs on people; we shun people. It doesn't mean that we spit in their face or anything like that. But we're being warned: We better be careful who we make close associations with."

Now the biggest example is in Numbers chapter 16. Let's go there, Numbers chapter 16. This is the example of Korah and Dathan and Abiram and On, and two hundred and fifty princes of Israel confronting Moses and Aaron. Numbers 16 verse 1, we'll read the first five verses and then jump to verse 20:

Numbers 16:1. Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, (KJV)

Obviously Korah had a pretty good pedigree—actually better than Moses.

Numbers 16:1b. and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, [they] took *men*: 2) And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

These were top people—two hundred and fifty of them!

Numbers 16:3. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, *[You take]* too much upon you, seeing all the congregation *are* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them: *[why do you]* lift yourselves *[up]* above the congregation of the LORD? (KJV)

They were accusing Moses of lifting himself up. Remember the burning bush? Moses didn't want any part of it! He didn't want to do this. He didn't lift himself up. He tried to run away from it. They had either forgotten or it was blocked out of their mind.

Verse 4:

Numbers 16:4. And when Moses heard *it*, (KJV)

Notice he didn't argue back. He didn't fight back. He didn't attack back.

Numbers 16:4b. he *[just]* fell *[on]* his face: 5) And he *[spoke]* unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow GOD *[is going to show]* who *are* his, and *who is* holy; and cause *him* to come near unto him *[meaning God]*: even *him* whom he *[has]* chosen will he cause to come near unto him. (KJV)

He's saying, "Whoever God has chosen, God's going to bring them to Him. It's not up to a man to do this. And tomorrow you're going to find out."

So for sake of time, we'll jump to verse 20:

Numbers 16:20. And the *[Eternal spoke]* unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, (KJV)

And notice what God was going to do! Verse 21, he said:

Numbers 16:21. Separate yourselves from among this congregation, (KJV)

Meaning the whole congregation! God said, "You separate yourself from the whole hundreds of thousands of these people:"

Numbers 26:21b. that I may consume them in a moment. (KJV)

But notice Moses' and Aaron's reactions!

Numbers 16:22. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and *[will you]* be *[angry]* with the *[whole]* congregation? (KJV)

"Yeah, there's two hundred and fifty princes; there's these other people; but think of the rest of the people who were just wrongly influenced by these tares."

Verse 24, God said—and God knew this; God was testing Moses to see if he was going to say, "Yeah, let's just wipe them all out." Or is Moses going to say what he did and beg for God's mercy? Verse 24:

Numbers 16:24. Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. (KJV)

In other words, "Don't associate with them. Remove yourself from them or you're going to be collateral damage when I get through doing what I'm going to do."

Verse 25:

Numbers 16:25. And Moses [got] up and [he] went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26) And he [spoke] unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest [you] be consumed in all their sins. (KJV)

What Moses is saying: "Be careful who you associate with. Be careful who you rub elbows with because you can be influenced like these two hundred and fifty princes were influenced wrongly. Be careful!"

Verse 27:

Numbers 16:27. So they [got] up from the tabernacle [the dwellings] of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: (KJV)

The people obeyed and they distanced themselves from these wicked men.

Numbers 16:27b. and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28) And Moses said [in verse 28], Hereby [you're going to] know that the [Eternal has] sent me to do all these works; for *I have not done them* of [my] own [hand]. (KJV)

"These are not from me." Verse 29:

Numbers 16:29. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; *then* the LORD [has] not sent me. (KJV)

"If they're going to get a cut and die of an infection five years from now, then you know I'm not the guy that God sent."

Verse 30:

Numbers 16:30. But if the LORD [makes] a new thing, and the earth [opens] her mouth, and [swallows] them up, with all that [*pertains* to] them, and they go down [quickly] into the pit; then [you] shall understand that these men have provoked the [Eternal]. (KJV)

"God is going to open the earth and He's going to swallow up these tares right now! And you're going to see it with your own eyes."

Verse 31:

Numbers 16:31: And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground [broke] asunder that was [underneath] them: 32) And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and [Notice this!] all the men that [*pertained*] unto Korah, (NKJ)

Those who were associated with him, who refused to distance themselves.

Numbers 16:32b. and all *their* goods. (NKJ)

And, unfortunately, their children, their wives, probably their animals too!

Numbers 16:33. They, and all that [*pertained*] to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34) And all Israel that *were* round about them fled at the cry of them: (KJV)

They heard their screams as they were going down into the pit.

Numbers 16:34b. for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up *a/so*. (KJV)

They learned a very powerful lesson. We don't want to follow their way. Look at their end. Look what's going to happen to them. And the Parable of the Tares tells us the same thing: Look at the end. Look what's going to happen to them down the road.

Verse 35:

Numbers 16:35. And there came out fire from the [Eternal], and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. (KJV)

Got them too! Not just the leaders but those who allowed themselves to be influenced by them! This is why it is so important who we keep company with—very important! Will we associate with God's people or will we associate with tares? Will we follow God or do we follow the example of men who are misled by our adversary?

Now, how do we identify the tares? Last point—how do we identify the tares? Remember we said the tare was a kind of grass that looked like wheat when it was

growing but that the tares had black fruit and the wheat did not? You see you can only tell wheat from the tares by doing what? Looking at the fruit. The fruit was the only thing that would allow you to tell wheat from the darnel. Look at the fruits! Now what did Christ say in Matthew 7? Let's go to Matthew 7 verse 15, He said again—we read this earlier:

Matthew 7:15. Beware of false prophets, [they] come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (KJV)

We read that earlier. But notice the very next verse! Matthew 7 verse 16:

Matthew 7:16. [You] shall know them by their fruits. (KJV)

And then He goes on to say:

Matthew 7:17. Even so every good tree [brings] forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree [brings] forth evil fruit. (KJV)

And He says, "You can't inter-mix the two."

Matthew 7:18. A corrupt tree can't bring forth good; a corrupt tree can't bring forth evil, (Paraphrased)

And He says:

Matthew 7:19. Every tree that [brings] not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (KJV)

Just like the tares! Verse 20, He repeats Himself.

Matthew 7:20. Wherefore [you know them] by their fruits. (KJV)

And then He goes on to say:

Matthew 7:21. Not every one that [says] unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that [does] the will of my Father which is in heaven.
22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, [haven't] we prophesied (KJV)

We've covered that before.

Matthew 7:22b. [Haven't we] done many wonderful works? (KJV)

He says:

Matthew 7:23b. depart from me, I never knew you—[you tares]. (KJV)

Look at 1 John 3 and verse 10. We know them by their fruits. Look at the fruits. Look at the end result. Look at the fruits. 1 John 3 and verse 10:

1 John 3:10. In this the children of God are manifest, (KJV)

Manifest means to be made apparent.

1 John 3:10b. and the children of the devil [are also manifest]: [How?] whosoever [does] not righteousness is not of God, neither he that [loves] not his brother. (KJV)

You can tell by the fruits. You can tell by their actions. You can tell by their deeds. It's what we do at the end of the day.

Look at chapter 4 and verse 1. 1 John 4 and verse 1, we're given an admonition. We're given an admonition.

1 John 4:1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, (KJV)

Don't believe it just to believe it. I mean somebody can say nice words; somebody can have a wonderful appearance, but He said, "Don't believe every spirit that comes your way. Don't believe every word that comes your way. Don't believe every book that you receive. He says:

1 John 4:1b. but try (KJV)

The New International says "test."

1 John 4:1b. but [test] the spirits [Look at the fruits.] whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (KJV)

Look at the fruits—try them, test them!

Look at Matthew 23 and the first three verses. Matthew 23—Christ is on an absolute tirade against the scribes and the Pharisees, but notice the advice that He gives us by way of these Scriptures. The first three verses of Matthew 23:

Matthew 23:1. Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2) Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3) All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not. (KJV)

So the question that we end with here is: How do you tell the tare from the wheat? Is: Do they exhibit the fruits of God's, spirit which we find in Galatians 5? Do they exhibit the fruits of God's spirit in their personal lives? Or do they say one thing and they do

something totally different? That's how we tell. So we tell the tares by their fruits. We try the spirits.

So we have seen that the tares are planted in secret by our enemy Satan. We have seen the tares are interspersed among God's people. We've seen the tares will be with us until the every end. We've seen that tares can bring much trouble upon God's people if God's people allow it. We've seen the tares are allowed by God to test His children and that we can know tares by their fruit.

Our task, therefore, is to make sure we keep our focus on God and we keep our focus on His Word and not allow those used by the Adversary to get us off track and to carry us astray. This is why we are told—and we won't turn there, but—in 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5, we're told to examine ourselves. It says:

2 Corinthians 13:5. Examine yourselves, whether [you] be in the faith; (KJV)

And that word *faith* is Strong's—the Greek word is *pistis* and it means a conviction or a belief that God exists; that He's Creator; that Christ is our Savior. It's being the faith that we have in an overall sense.

He says, "Make sure, examine yourselves, whether you're in the faith or whether you're being led astray by a tare." We must continue to examine ourselves to see everyday if we're becoming more like Jesus Christ or we're not. Are we following God or are we following something else.

Now if we do this, if we examine ourselves, if we are aware, if we understand the tares are among us, then let's go to close with Matthew 13 and verse 43. Notice what happens to those who are aware and do not allow the tares to choke them out or to destroy them. Matthew 13 and verse 43:

Matthew 13:43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (KJV)

That is our reward! We will shine forth as spirit beings, as the sun, as bright as the sun because we're spirit beings in God's Kingdom.

But then notice the admonition in the last sentence!

Matthew 13:43b. Who [has] ears to hear, let him hear. (KJV)

Let's learn the lesson of the Parable of the Tares!