

Wheat and Tares



Facing Perilous Times (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

I can't go into the details of this story but if you want to get my series of tapes on deliverance and demonology, it's recorded there. At that point the young lady who played the piano for the morning worship service who sat by herself on a bench in front on my left threw a violent, demonic fit, let out a piercing scream, slumped to the floor right in front of the pulpit and lay there writhing in a very unladylike way. And there I was confronted by it. I knew immediately I either had to prove what I was preaching or stop preaching it. And thank God, with the help of my dear first wife, we proved it. We cast the demon out of that lady in front of everybody. And they are a good Pentecostal congregation. I mean, I've never seen people with such wide open eyes in my life! I can't go into the details because I've got another message to preach, but I never think about that truth about Abraham's descendants without my mind going back to that incident. It was a turning point in my whole ministry.

Anyhow, what I want to emphasize is in darkness we can be brilliantly illuminating. And that's our responsibility. The darker the world gets the more we need to shine and represent the Lord.

And then another aspect of this same principle of the intermingling of good and evil is found in the parable of the wheat and the tares which is familiar, I'm sure, to most of you. In Matthew 13 you remember the workers said to the owner of the field, "Shall we go out and pull up the tares?" And the owner said, "No. Don't do that, because you may pull up the wheat with them." And this is what he said:

> "Let both wheat and tares grow together until the harvest. And at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

And then it says in the interpretation, verse 38:

> "The field is the world, the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one, Satan. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the

angels."

So "the sons of the kingdom" and "the sons of the wicked one" are going to be coexisting side by side right up to the close of the age. And incidentally, God has not authorized us to discern who is who. It's too difficult a job. Only the angels will be able to do it. But every one of us needs to be examining our own lives.

See, the difference between wheat and tares is they both look alike until you examine the fruit. The wheat has fruit, the tares doesn't. That's going to be the dividing line between real Christians and professing Christians. But, they're going to continue side by side right up to the close of the age.

And another interesting fact is that the same climate that ripens the wheat also ripens the tares. And that's happening. Good is ripening and evil is ripening. And you see, climatically you can't separate them. If you want the wheat ripened you've got to let the tares ripen. You can't arrange it so that the sun only shines on the wheat and not on the tares.

And that's true in the world today. The good are ripening and the bad are ripening. I first came to New Zealand in 1967. It was a paradise. It was a peaceful, tranquil nation. Law abiding, harmonious—and I just fell in love with it. I've been in love with New Zealand ever since. But I'd like to tell you, I don't have to tell you it's a very different nation today, is that right? What's happening in New Zealand? The wheat is ripening, the tares are ripening. You say, "God, we don't want the tares." But God says if you want the wheat to ripen you've got to be prepared for the tares to ripen too.

How would you describe the climate that permits both to ripen? I just offer you a suggestion. One key word, permissiveness. You see, almost anything goes today. In the world or in the church. The restraints and restrictions are being taken off so everybody's real nature is beginning to show. That's the process.

Let's look at one other Scripture along the same line in Revelation 22, the last chapter of the Bible. Another picture of the scene just up the close of the age. Revelation 22, beginning at verse 10, reading 10, 11 and 12.

> "And he said to me [I think that's the angel that brought the revelation to John—he said to me], 'Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.' Then he said, 'He who is unjust let him be unjust still; he who is filthy let him be filthy still; he who is righteous let him be righteous still; and he who is holy let him be holy still.'"

And one version says it this way:

> "He who is righteous let him be still more righteous; he who is holy still more holy; but he who is unrighteous still more unrighteous; and he who is filthy still more filthy."

Now it surprised me when I discovered that the Bible said that. But that's what it is, it's the process of ripening the wheat and the tares. And it's almost as if God says to the wicked, "Go on. Live it up. Show your real nature because you don't have much longer."

You see, we have a problem with wickedness and evil. I mean, it's not a problem that I can resolve but there are some facts. Even the wicked serve God's purposes. Did you know that? Did you know that Satan is one of God's most useful instruments? Did you realize that? He does a whole lot of useful jobs for God, including testing you and me. And the Bible says rejoice when you're tested. But in Proverbs 16:4 it says:

> "The Lord has made all things for Himself. Yes, even the wicked, for the day of doom [or evil]."

So the wicked are there according to God's plan. God's truth is going to be demonstrated both in the righteous and in the wicked.

So that's a little introduction to our theme. The thought that I want to bring out is light – darkness; good – evil; wheat – tares, side by side. Not some simplistic process by which everything good flourishes and everything evil is abolished. We'd all like it that way—provided we're quite sure that we're not one of the tares—but it's not going to be that way. And it's going to be complex. We're going to have to be very vigilant. Many of the Scriptures that relate to this period, the word that they emphasize is watch. Or, in the modern versions, be alert, be vigilant. In Mark 13, which is the chapter that Jesus deals with the period before the end of the age, the word watch occurs four times. Jesus says at the end of it, "What I say to you, My disciples, I say to all. Watch. Stay awake. Be vigilant. Don't be caught off your guard. Don't take things for granted."

Now I'd like to turn to a chapter in 2 Timothy, chapter 3, which mainly focuses on this period. I really want to just work through it systematically without dwelling too long on any part of it and try to pick out the salient features. It begins

with a statement:

> "But know this, that in the last days [that's the time we're talking about, in the last days] perilous times will come."

So Paul says to Timothy just be quite sure about one thing. The close of the age is going to be a very difficult time. Interestingly, in the translation I'm reading from, in the margin they use the phrase "times of stress" will come. That's interesting because up till World War II nobody ever talked about stress. You could go to a doctor ten times and he wouldn't even think of mentioning stress. Nowadays it's hard to get out of a doctor's office without being told about stress. Isn't that true? I don't think the doctors are wrong. What I think is happening is something that was predicted in Scripture is working true in history.

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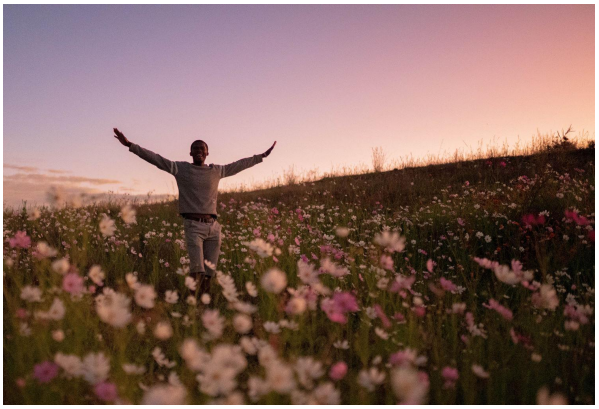
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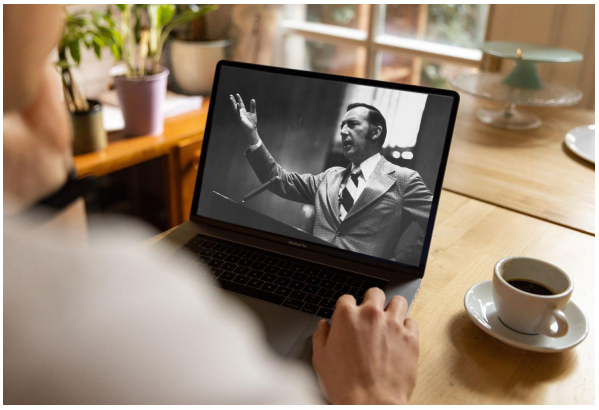
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