

# Why Is There Chaff in My Wheat?

And Why Is Revival So Messy?

Rockey Jackson - March 30, 2001

Section 7 of 9

## Do We Have Tares in Our Wheat?

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. It is another teaching illustration taken from the simple realities of agriculture. We know what wheat is, but what is a tare? In this context with wheat, a tare is a weed. It is a wild grass plant that produces a tiny seed that has no commercial value. Before heading out, the wheat and the tare plants look alike. It is only when the wheat heads begin to swell big and the tare heads remain tiny that they can be told apart. A tare plant takes the same space to grow as a plant of wheat. So if there are tares in a field, they take up space that could have been occupied by wheat. Therefore, tares decrease the harvest. Here is the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares:

**“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn’”” Matt. 13:24-30.**

The reality of this parable was brought home to me in my own garden. Years ago, when I was in the Air Force and stationed at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska, I kept a large garden of 50 by 125 feet. That's the exact size of the lot my current home sets on. Now my family loves sweet corn on the cob. But we don't like it overly mature, when it's become hard and the sugar has all turned to starch. We want it soft, milky, and sweet. So I would plant about half of my garden in sweet corn. I normally planted two pounds of sweet corn seed divided equally among four varieties with growing lengths from 63 to 92 days. I would divide each variety into two plantings, and I spaced my plantings in such a way that each planting would mature 7 to 10 days apart. That meant that we could pig-out on fresh, perfectly ripened sweet corn for over two months each summer and we still had plenty left over to freeze for the rest of the year. When the corn tasseled out, our anticipation would begin. Soon we could see the ears begin to appear. When the silk drooped out of the end of the ears, we knew we wouldn't have to wait long. Day by day we'd feel for the fullness of the ear, our anticipation growing. When the ear felt appropriately full, we'd pull down a piece of the husk and sneak a look at the kernels. If they were ripe, off the stalk the ear would come, and we'd have fresh corn on the cob that night. Sweet corn on the cob, vine ripened tomatoes, fresh cucumbers in vinegar water, fresh squash, green beans, perfectly ripe melons, and strawberries, oh how I miss those fresh vegetable feasts!

One year when we were taking leave to visit our parents in Colorado, one variety of our sweet corn was up, but not yet ready for cultivating. By the time we returned, the corn was over a foot high and doing fine, but the weeds were doing just as well and the weeds were competing with the corn for nourishment, moisture, and light. So I got busy and pulled all those weeds, but the corn and the weeds had become so large that their roots were intermingled. When I pulled the weeds I disturbed the roots of the corn. That was too great a shock and the corn never recovered. It never grew above my knee and its ears were shriveled and unfit to eat. Can you imagine our two weeks of disappointment with no sweet corn? Out of the four varieties of corn, the one we lost was our favorite! The next year the same thing happened, but I wasn't going to make the same mistake twice! This time I didn't pull the weeds. I took my grass shears, cut off the weeds close to the ground, and laid the tops down as mulch. Because most of the weeds were varieties of grass this didn't kill them and they soon began to grow again, but now they didn't grow well at all because the corn had grown too and filled in the space. The weeds were now trying to grow in the shade of the corn and they weren't having much luck. You see I didn't need to uproot the weeds for the corn to do well. I just had to give the corn a bit of an advantage and then it was able to overcome the weeds by itself.

In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, our Lord has told us that we will always have agents of His enemy right in our midst. They will look like us, talk like us, and without supernatural help we won't know who they are, but we don't need to waste our time ferreting them out. All we have to do is provide an environment advantageous for the growing of saints and they will choke most of the tares out. Those few that remain will be revealed at the harvest when they are lacking in good fruit, but even that is not what we should hope and pray for. Our God is a God of miracles. If he can change the Pharisee of Pharisees and the chief of all sinners Saul of Tarsus into the Apostle Paul, a bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, then He can perform the miracle of turning our tares into His wheat. As He said, "Let both grow together until the harvest."