

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG46-The Mystery Of This Age

I believe we are living in the age when Christ is bringing His Kingdom to this earth. I know that this is a process. The Scripture refers to it as the Parousia, or the Presence, the coming of the Lord. But I think it is a great honor that we have to live in this day and age. It's not an easy day. It's not a simple time. But I would like to try to paint a picture, because I believe Christ really did explain part of the mystery or the mysteries of this age that we are living in today. So let's get started and talk about this.

The ruler of this world, the devil, is emphatic and determined to stop God from setting Christ on His earthly throne and establishing the Messianic Kingdom. The devil seeks to continue his reign permanently through eternity as the ruler of this world. He wants to establish his kingdom of darkness on the earth, and he wants to install his sons on the throne to reign over all mankind. Christ describes this process in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, a parable so simple, really, that any child can understand it. But before we get into the parable itself, I want to look at a few Scriptures that talk about this idea of the devil being the ruler of this world, because I think it is foundational to an understanding of what we are talking about.

John 12:31 says, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out." Christ Himself is saying that judgment is coming upon the world; and, of course, that process started with the cross of Christ, with His resurrection and with His ascension. Part of that process of judgment is the fact that the ruler of this world will be cast out. He refers to the devil as the ruler of this world; so we have to take that at face value. It is Christ who is saying it, and He knows what He is talking about.

In Ephesians 2:1-2, it says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." Again, we see this idea that the prince of the power of the air, the spiritual force, the devil himself, is influencing this world and what is transpiring in the world.

Let's read one more, out of 1 John 5:19. "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." Whether we like this concept or not, we know we talk about the cross and the victory of Christ – He won the victory – but as it stands, we are in a place where that victory must be executed and fully realized where this earth is concerned. This is why Christ said, "My Kingdom is not of the world." In His parable He said a rich ruler goes to another place, and he gets the kingdom and comes back to the earth. The Kingdom of heaven is what is established as the Kingdom; it is then brought back into this earth. In the meantime, we realize the reality that the ruler of this world is the devil. That is the way Christ put it; that is the way it functions; and that is what we are seeing an end come to in our day and age. Thank the Lord for it, and God help us to be faithful saints to walk in this hour, to bring about Your will and Your purposes on this earth.

Now look at Matthew the thirteenth chapter. We'll start at verses 24-30. "Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The 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?' And 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?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow 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."'""

We'll continue the story at Matthew 13:36-43. "Then He left the crowd and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' And He said, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 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; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 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. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear'"

Sometimes I think people try to make what is going on and transpiring in the world so difficult; but here we have Christ's very simple worldview and explanation of the world surrounding us and what is going on. When His disciples asked Him, He said very plainly, the field is the world. The seed that is sown, those are the sons of the Kingdom, the sons of God. The tares are the sons of the evil one. Who is the evil one? He is the enemy, the devil. And at the end of the age, there is going to be a harvest. This is really what we find ourselves living in the midst of today.

It's interesting that Christ says, "Do not go in and try to tear out the tares. At this particular point, they need to grow up together." And as much as we don't like that scenario, Christ Himself is saying that it is necessary that we as sons of God grow up alongside the tares; because if they were torn out, something would damage our growth. What is important is that we grow and that we mature, so He did not want the tares uprooted lest the wheat would also be harmed in this process. He says, "Let both of them grow up until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest, then we will deal with it." And I believe we are coming to that time of the harvest.

Let's look at Revelation 14:14-16. "Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.' Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped."

This is a clue for us of what we are looking towards. The angel comes out and says, "It's time for the harvest, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." This goes right along with the parable that Christ told. He said, "No, leave the wheat and the tares together until the time of the harvest." What is the time of the harvest? It is the time when the wheat matures, when it is ready to be harvested; and this is what the angel is proclaiming. He says to the Son of Man, "Go reap, swing the sickle, because the harvest of the earth has become ripe." This is why to me in this ministry, I am so concerned about God's people maturing; because I believe that our maturity, that the maturity of the wheat, is the trigger to the great harvest that comes. And I think the harvest has to wait for that process.

The evil one, who is the devil, plants his sons into the earth. The earth is the Kingdom. The Son of Man realizes that these tares are to choke out and stop the maturing of the wheat, which are the sons of the Kingdom. The devil knows that the harvest day is the day of judgment, and that harvest waits until the wheat, the sons of God, are ripened or matured. Therefore, he is looking for the tares; he plants the tares right in and among the wheat. What are the tares supposed to do? They are supposed to rob the nutrients. They are supposed to be a distraction. They are supposed to choke out the wheat as it is in its growth process; and therefore it tries to stop the maturing of the wheat. It tries to hinder it in every way. It in and of itself becomes a distraction – that is what the workers were saying: "Shall we pull up the tares? Should we focus on the tares?" And the Lord said, "No, don't focus on the tares." The focus is on the wheat, and it is on the time of maturing of the wheat.

The devil is going to try to do everything he can; and he uses his natural seed, the sons of the devil, which are earthly individuals, to try to distract and destroy the coming forth of God's sons. We see this dynamic is the dynamic that we live in today. But the harvest comes; it will come. And when it comes, we realize that the devil can delay no more. The harvest is ready; the Kingdom of God will come forth; and the sooner that the maturity of the wheat arrives, the quicker this harvest arrives.

God must uproot all that the ruler of this world has planted. He must uproot it before He can build His Kingdom. If you remember the story about Israel coming out of Egypt, God would not let Israel go into Canaan until the iniquity of the Amorites had come to the full. Then He could send Israel in to harvest out the Canaanites, to get rid of them, to remove them absolutely and completely, so that what He built in the land of Canaan was not built on the peoples or governments or cultures that had existed there. God has to build His own Kingdom, His Kingdom of righteousness, which has its own foundations and master plan. Therefore, God must remove all of the old that exists on this earth in order to establish His Kingdom and His righteousness. And that is literally what He does in this parable. He comes first and removes it out of the earth.

Remember, the Kingdom of God is on this earth. It is not that we float around in heaven through eternity. We are waiting for the Messiah to return, to be seated on the throne of David, to establish His earthly Kingdom. And the field, according to Christ in this parable, is the earth. This Kingdom that God is planning and executing will be on this earth; but He must first remove out of the earth all of the tares. Everything that the ruler of this world, the god of this age, the devil, has implanted into the earth and done over all of these ages must first be removed; then He can start afresh to build His Kingdom.

I want to look at another Scripture, in Daniel the seventh chapter, starting at verses 21-22. "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom." We go down to verses 26-27. It says, "But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever." Everything about the devil, everything about the kingdoms of this age that have been from the beginning of time on this earth, will be annihilated and destroyed forever. "Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His Kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey Him."

Daniel 2:44-45 says, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the

great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy." These are the dreams that Daniel was interpreting back to the king. He was saying that all governments, all things that man had created in this earth, would first be eliminated; and when they were eliminated, then God would grant to the saints of the Highest One His Kingdom on this earth, and they would possess that Kingdom. The Ancient of Days comes and judgment is passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrives when the saints possess the Kingdom. The tares have been removed, and the wheat has come to maturity; and that wheat possesses all of the earth, and it represents the great Kingdom of God that is coming forth.

We know in Matthew 24:21-22 it says, "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." So the days leading up to the harvest will be cut short. That only can mean that God must bring about, through the outpouring of His Spirit, the quick maturing of His sons, faster than normal; and that we must grow and mature quickly so that the tares do not have a chance to mature first and dominate and destroy what God has in mind.

In John 17:14-20, Christ said, "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." See, Christ's intent was not for us to be taken out of this world. His intent was that the Father protect us from the influences of the evil one, of the tares that were growing up alongside of us in the world. He said "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth;" see, mature them, sanctify them. "Your Word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word," which is us in our generation.

We see that our best defense is our strong offense. We are not to be defensive about what is going on in the world. We are not to get distracted by the tares. Our fight is not against flesh and blood, it is not against those things that are going on. Our fight is a fight of faith. Ephesians 4:13 says, "Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." See, we are to mature. That is why He has us here in this world.

Verses 14-16 say, "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." Our focus is to be a body growing, maturing in our love, one for another, becoming all that He has for us to become as His children in this earth.

1 Peter says in chapter 2, verses 1-2, "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." See, we are to put aside all the things that the tares that have been planted by the devil have been trying to distract us with. We don't get caught up in malice and deceit and hypocrisy and slander and hatred. We put all those things aside. That is not what we are focusing upon. But like

newborn babes, we long for the pure milk of the Word that God has given us, that by it we may grow with respect to our salvation. We grow and mature in it.

In Luke 18:6-8, He said, "And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'" See, the purpose of these tares, the purpose of the devil in this age, is to choke out our faith. It is to come against us so that we lose our faith, so that we don't cry day and night unto the Lord with a faith, knowing that He is going to come through, knowing that He is going to cut short this time in righteousness. He is going to bring about our maturity. He is going to release us through the pouring out of His Spirit in this age; as it says in Joel, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy." The maturing of the sons happens in this. It is like God comes with a preemptive strike to stop what Satan's purposes are. He does that by maturing us. And the angel comes out, as we read in Revelation, and says, "The harvest is ready, put in the sickle."

I want us to see in this podcast where we are, who we are. We are living in the earth, which is the field. We have been planted in it to be maturing as the sons of God, to come forth and inherit the Kingdom of God. And we know that the devil, the enemy of God, has come and sown his tares, his seed, the sons of the wicked one, to try to circumvent God's Kingdom and to bring about the continuation of the ruler of this age, the ruler of this world, to keep himself in dominion over this earth. But God is not going to allow that. He is going to send His angels to pull out of this earth all that has polluted it, all of the tares that have been planted to destroy the plan of God and the bringing forth of His Kingdom.

I want to emphasize a few final points for this time together. Yeshua stated that the earth was now in a race between the sons of God and the sons of the evil one to come to maturity first, and trigger the end-time harvest. We sometimes feel helpless to see God's judgment come upon evil, injustice, and wickedness in this earth; but we are not hopeless. Our fight is a fight of faith to grow up and mature to the measure of the stature which is the fullness of Christ. That is our focus and where we place our energy. Don't feel that there is nothing we can do about the place we are in. We can become. That is the key.

One last thought: God will bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night. We must cry day and night that His judgments cut short the time like a preemptive strike against the plan of the devil. We believe to become and mature in Your Presence, Lord; and we give ourselves to the cry, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on this earth as it is in heaven."