

Good & Evil in the Kingdom of Heaven

1. Review: What is the “kingdom of heaven” (24, 31, 33)? Do you think there is any difference between the “kingdom of heaven” (used only in Matthew, 32 times) and the “kingdom of God” (used mostly in Mark & Luke, 45 times total)? Explain your answer (compare Mark 1:15 and Matt. 10:7; Luke 8:10 and Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:26, 30-31 and Matt. 13:24, 31).
2. Why would an enemy sow tares in the field (25-29)? How does this compare with why the devil would place his sons in the kingdom of heaven (38-39)? How does the landowner’s response to the enemy’s tactics show wisdom (28-30)? How should this impact how we respond to non-Christians who associate with the kingdom of heaven?
3. What parallels does the parable in verses 31-32 have with the first two parables in this chapter (3-9, 24-30)? What does the mustard seed represent (consider Matt. 17:20)? What do the “birds of the air” represent (32), and what did they represent in verses 4 and 19?
4. What does the leaven in verse 33 represent (Matt. 16:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8)? How does leaven spread in dough (Galatians 5:9)? What does the flour or meal represent that the leaven easily spreads through? What do you think our role may be in watching out for leaven in the kingdom and containing its spread?
5. When in Matthew did Jesus start speaking to the crowds in parables (3)? Why did He start speaking to them in parables (34-35)? Why does God keep some truths hidden or secret from some people? Who are the ones that He hides them from (10-15)?
6. What did the disciples do when they did not understand Jesus’ parable (36)? What should we do when we do not understand something in the Bible (Psalm 119:18; Acts 8:30-31)?
7. How does the Son of Man sow sons of the kingdom in the world (37-38)? What do you think our role may be in this process?
8. In what two ways are the sons of the evil one described (41)? What is their fate (40-42)? What is the fate of the sons of the kingdom (43)? How do these two fates compare?
9. How are the sons of the kingdom described (43)? Do you think their righteousness is positional or practical here? Why does Jesus add “He who has ears, let him hear” to the end of His explanation of this parable?