

~ God's Harvest Times ~

Sowing and Reaping

With Eden's bounty forbidden, sowing in the spring, laboring through the summer and waiting to harvest in the fall was a way of life. Man's constant toiling for food was a daily reminder of Adam's sinful choice. And God's curse upon the earth left man with thorns and thistles to sustain his life rather than freely eating of the trees of life. Genesis 2:16; 3:17-19

Consider God's blessing of Joseph to wisely store from the seven years of harvest plenty to later feed the Egyptians and his family. Today the American Farm Bureau Federation reports that 2% of the US population operates 97% of the farms with about 33% of its harvest exported to feed the world's hungry. Also Israel's advances in agricultural production are being shared with the world, per Ertharin Cousin, the Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme. Israel's renewed land of "milk and honey" is blessing others.

Very often our natural daily life activities, such as sowing and reaping, provide an excellent insight into the higher meaning of life's experiences. "...they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." (Job 4:8) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7) "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. 9:6) What has man learned from either the natural or prophetic harvest lessons?

The Harvest's Work

What is the purpose of the harvest? Is it not a separating work? The farmer does not bring the whole plant into the barn, but removes the valuable part, and leaves the rest in the field providing

nourishment for future crops. The seed collected will feed many families; a portion will be the next season's planting.

Have you not thought about God's plans for mankind and how His harvest work can be illustrated by our natural harvest work?

God's overall plan is for mankind to fill the Earth. Because of sin, Eve, depicting all mothers, was told, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children..." (Genesis 3:16) The generations of children to follow resulted in both the joy of the good seeds and sorrow with the wayward ones. And with each death comes man's perceived general harvest with the "good" going to heaven and those who did evil, not. Yet what does the Bible reveal about God's true harvesting work?

To find the answers, we need to ask 1) when were the seeds planted, 2) when is the harvest, 3) to whom does the harvest apply, 4) who is the reaper, 5) what are the results or purpose of the harvest?

Identifying God's Harvests

As we will see, the harvests in God's plan were the ending of seasons, a gathering or separating for a future purpose. True, the flood of Noah's day was an ending of a period called by Peter, "...the world that then was..." (2 Peter 3:6) The biblical accounts do not identify a special seed developed to be harvested. There is no reaper mentioned. And the primary purpose was to stop the rapid fall of mankind into unrecoverable unrighteousness. (Genesis 6:1-6) Only righteous Noah and his family were saved. This was not a harvest. For the same reason, Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction was a judgment of the extent of

man's fall into evil with Lot and his family escaping.

God's three harvests spoken of by Jesus and others were; The Wheat and The Chaff, The Wheat and The Tares, and The Sheep and The Goats. Let's apply our five questions to these events to see God's overall plan.

The Wheat and The Chaff

John the Baptist introduces the first harvest with Jesus being the reaper, beginning the harvest of the fruitage of Israel at Christ's first advent. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." Luke 3:15-17

The field was not planted at Jordan, but in 1813 BC with Jacob blessing his 12 sons before his death. And God blessed Jacob's family which grew into 600,000 sons when Moses led them out of Egypt and they entered into a Law Covenant with God. "For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth." (Deut. 7:6) "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: ..." Amos 3:2

Now 1842 years later the field was ready and Jesus began the harvest saying, "...The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send

forth labourers into his harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

What was the purpose of this Jewish harvest? Some have interpreted Luke 3:15-17 that the good of this harvest went to heaven and the others were judged with eternal torment. However Jesus did not place his beheaded cousin, John the Baptist, in heaven. (Matthew 11:11) Nor could he place John and the others into a "hell". God's separation was to neither location. We find the purpose in Galatians "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* [the Jew] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:24-25) The Jewish Law showed the need of a savior who could live up to the Law and who could pay the price to ransom mankind.

The words of the harvest were a calling to separate. The Wheat were the "Israelites indeed", called to be disciples of the promised savior and to follow in his footsteps. The Chaff were those who did not hear the call because of being prideful or inattentive. The exclusive Harvest/Gospel call to the Jews continued until 36 AD when the Gospel call was expanded to the Gentiles, starting with Cornelius, to replace the planned natural Jewish branches. (Acts 10) Furthermore Paul tell us, "...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Romans 11:1-32) As a nation, the Chaff's punishment could not have been eternal torment since Satan blinded their actions. In 70 AD God's sentence came with a fiery destruction of the Temple. And with Rome either killing the Jews or dispersing them across the Roman Empire, Israel paid the price with the loss of national polity for a time.

The Wheat and The Tares

We are familiar with the parable given by Jesus of The Wheat and The Tares found in Matthew 13:24-30. A closer look at Jesus' explanation gives us additional information to answer our five questions.

"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*; that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew 13:37-43

The Gospel message started in Israel and then proceeded into the whole world. And in this field (the early churches) were planted good seeds (true heart-committed disciples) drawn by God's plan. As the apostles slept (died), there were Tares (nominal Christians) sown in the same field who were drawn by the worldly advantages of a church association. And the two seeds were permitted to develop together throughout the Gospel Age until the time of this harvest.

At the time of Christ's return, the Chief Reaper finds the fields filled with unfaithful tares and only a few remaining Wheat. (Revelation 17:14) The separation work begins with a harvest message to "come out of her [the nominal church-

es] my people [the Wheat] that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4) Satan continues to blind many, and they have remained in cast-off Babylon including the bound Tares. Yet the purpose of this harvest will be shown in the third harvest.

The Sheep and the Goats

Jesus reveals the third and final harvest in Matthew 25:31-46. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was

thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

This harvest could not be in parallel with either of the other harvests. In the first two, the reaper begins alone and collects other reapers for a select seed. Now all reapers are assembled, The Christ (Head and body), on the throne to judge the fruitage of this field. Col. 1:18

In the first harvest the Jewish Wheat became Jesus' disciples, the seeds planted for the second harvest. The Chaff remained. In the second harvest, both the Jewish and Gentile Wheat received a spiritual birth to be on the Throne (Rev. 14:1-5) or before the Throne (Rev. 7:9, 14, 15). The Tares remained. The third harvest now deals with the World, "all nations". And as there was testing associated with the previous harvests, there needs yet to be a season when ALL remaining will have God's pure laws written in their hearts and minds. The ALL are from Adam to present-day man including the Chaff and the Tares. They will be given an opportunity to learn and exercise righteousness – in the 1000-year reign of Christ's kingdom without Satan's blinding influence on mankind. In this age the resurrected seed will have the opportunity to walk up the "Highway of Holiness" to be without sin like Adam once was. Isaiah 35:1-10, 65:21-24; Psalms 67:6

God's Ultimate Judgment

God has not judged anyone without sufficient knowledge of His standards of right and wrong. (Heb. 10:26-29; 1 Tim. 2:4) After perfect Adam willfully sinned, for over 6000 years mankind has learned a valuable lesson of the effects of evil and death. God's mercy planned for mankind to be ransomed and to learn obedience and to say, "O how love I thy law!" Psalms 119:97

There will be separations during the 1000-year reign. There will be some who will refuse to obey and shall die 100 years after their resurrection. (Isaiah 65:20) Some will not pass the little season because of secret faults within their hearts to return to evil. (Rev. 20:7-10; 21:7,8) The final harvest act will be separating the Goats (with greater self-love), from the Sheep (selfless love). God desires for all of his creatures, both heavenly and earthly, to love and worship him in spirit and truth and to "love thy brother". Matthew 22:37-40; John 4:24

Having knowledge, then tested, the obedient will have their names written in the book of life. Those NOT willing to completely purge evil from their hearts and minds will not have life. They will be sentenced to Second Death which is not a state of evil torment as many wish for evil doers. God has the power of life, existence. And He has power to remove life, death – complete extinction – Second Death. (Acts 3:23; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:16; Rev. 21:7-8) Then God's harvest plan will be complete. Sin/Evil will never be permitted again anywhere in His kingdom and the earth will be filled with righteous loving mankind. ♦

Click [REPLY](#), and send an e-mail for asking a copy of "Being Saved". ♦