

ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A large crowd gathered by the shore and Jesus taught them from a boat. He told them parables to help them understand what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Jesus said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.

'But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

'When the wheat sprouted the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants asked him, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

"An enemy did this," he replied. The servants asked, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?" "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat also. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to collect the weeds first and tie them in bundles to be burned. After that, they will gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

When Jesus left the crowds and went into a house, His disciples asked Him to explain the parable to them. Jesus answered, 'The person who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom.

'The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

'Just as the weeds are gathered up and burned in the fire, at the end of the age the Son of Man will send out His angels to gather up all those who cause people to sin and all those who do evil things. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where they will cry and gnash their teeth. Then God's people will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Listen, then, if you have ears!'

Jesus always used stories and illustrations when speaking to the crowds. On one occasion Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field.

'It is the smallest of all seeds.

'But it becomes the largest of garden plants. It grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.'

Jesus also used this illustration. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread.

'Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.'

Jesus also explained, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field.

'In his excitement, he hid it again then sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.'

Jesus got people thinking by saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls.

'When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!'