

QUESTION: In Matthew 7:21-23, who are they talking about, unbelievers or saved people?

ANSWER:

- **Matthew 7:21-23** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast our demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, '**I NEVER knew you**; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

This is talking about unbelievers, because Jesus said to them, "I never knew you!" Jesus' parables in Matthew 13:24-50 tell us that evil men and false prophets will infiltrate God's kingdom, and **they will look like God's people on the outside**, but they will be false. Jesus says in Matthew 7:21-23 that MANY will say to Him at the judgment that they did many things in His name, but He will say "**I NEVER KNEW YOU!**" (Notice, Jesus says "I NEVER knew you," not, "I USED to know you, but you lost your salvation"). Just as Adam and Eve had to have a CHOICE between good and evil **in order to CHOOSE God with their own FREE WILL**, God allows false teaching and evil men masquerading as Christians, **in order for us to CHOOSE the TRUTH** from among all the LIES of Satan. Satan will be destroyed and all evil will be done away with when Jesus returns to set up His kingdom on earth, **at "the end of this age"** (Matt. 13:39). Then there will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more sin (Rev. 21:4), and it is THEN that God removes all the false prophets and false, so-called believers from among His people. All throughout the Bible, God promises that He WILL judge ALL SIN and ALL EVIL, but not until the appointed time, **at the END of this AGE**, at the Day of Judgment. It is because of His grace and mercy that God does not INSTANTLY judge sin and evil, because He is still giving those people **a CHANCE to REPENT** and turn to Him to be saved.

- **II Peter 3:9** "The Lord is not slack (slow) concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering (patient) toward us, **not willing that ANY should perish**, but that all should come to repentance."
- **Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-42** "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.'" "...His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' He answered and said to them, 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, **the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the TARES are the sons of the wicked one**. The enemy who sowed them is the **DEVIL**, the harvest is the end of the age, and **the reapers are the ANGELS**. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be **at the end of this age**. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'"

- **Read Matthew 13:47-50** (Verses 49-50) "So it will be **at the END of the AGE**. The angels will come forth, **SEPARATE the wicked from among the just**, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Definition: "TARES" - "tares" are a weed-like plant that LOOKS exactly like wheat, but of course does not have the wheat kernel, so therefore it is of no value. Jesus used "tares" as an example of people who would **APPEAR on the OUTSIDE to be saved**, and members of His kingdom, but would actually be empty and false. We have Jesus' own words that there will be **many so-called Christians in the church who are NOT God's people and have NEVER BEEN God's people** - they belong to the devil all along (like Judas Iscariot). These are the ones who may clean up their lives temporarily, but they continually fall back into sin, because they have never had a new birth and a heart-change. These are the ones who are MISTAKEN by many to be Christians who have "lost their salvation" and turned their backs on Christ. These are the ones who "cause the Way of Truth to be blasphemed" (II Peter 2:2), because they CLAIM to be Christians, yet do not ACT like Christians, and so others judge the church by them, and say, "The church is full of hypocrites!"

Definition: "LEST you also UPROOT the WHEAT with them" - Lest means "for fear that" something might happen. So God does not immediately uproot the tares for fear that some of the wheat might be uprooted or damaged in the process. Many Christians ("the wheat") are still babies, or are still so immature and unlearned in the word of God (even though they SHOULD be mature) that they would not understand, even to the point of seriously damaging their faith, if God suddenly sent judgment on a number of people in their congregation who were supposedly "good Christians." Instead, God expects us all to grow and mature, and to **STUDY His word**, so that we will have our senses exercised **to DISCERN between the GOOD and the EVIL**.

- **Hebrews 5:13-14** "For everyone who partakes only of milk is **unskilled in the WORD of righteousness**, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use (practice) have their senses exercised **to discern both good and evil**."