

13:25

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares whatever “tares” are, they apparently look like wheat, which is the point of the passage. **among the wheat, and went his way.**

13:31

Another parable a third one upon which he offers no explanation. **put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:**

Mat 13:32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

13:33

Another parable really, a 4th one with no explanation **spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.**

Mat 13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

13:35

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, Asaph out of Psalm 72 **saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.**

Whatever these parables mean, they have been reality for a long, long time—even though they may not have been explained to anybody. Gravity existed before it was labeled.

13:36

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, “Well that wasn’t very nice of Him.” Apparently the reason for this is that He was tired. Contextually, he is on a boat teaching (verse 2). This probably got tiring. Projecting to those on the shore can get tiring. Perhaps, more than that...the disciples had questions. Sometimes you’re simply not supposed to be with the masses as much as the future leaders of the masses. If he were writing books today, He would teach until the last one left the beach, right? Wouldn’t that be the counsel? Well, Jesus said sometimes it’s just time to send people away. Sometimes, we need to make time just for questions; and not just questions, but questions with eternal consequence. **and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.** It seems like we ought to find those who know more than us on certain topics and ask pointed questions.

Notice, by the way, the disciples didn’t ask for explanations of all the parables. Apparently, they thought they understood the mustard seed or the dough.

13:37-39

He answered and said unto them, Not everything in a parable means something. Usually, there’s a main point. He goes out of His way here, though, to identify some of these players. **He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world;** here, as in verses 40 and 49, the word is *aion* for “age.” Why does this matter? Because it is a different word in verse 38. One refers to the realm of creation while the other deals with a time period. **and the reapers are the angels.**

*Matthew 12:32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in **this age or in the age to come.***

Some things to consider beginning here:

1. This does not deal with the realm of creation either. “In this time period or the time to come...” A new age begins when this one (from Jesus’ perspective) ends.

2. The next “age” is one in which there are no “tares.” See verse 38 & 39 for a reminder. Remember also that the “kingdom will be come” when the will of the Father is done “on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6). The next be a time when the “kingdom has come to earth.” That is why here, in verse 38, the field is the world and the world, without tares in the next age, will be a kingdom.

*Matthew 24:1 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." 3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of **the end of the age?**" ...29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other...32 From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly, I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.***

So Jesus has no issues saying that the end of the age will bring a new age and that it will involve the 2nd coming and the destruction of the temple. He furthermore says it will occur in His own generation. He is either answering all three questions of 24:3 or he's not.

With the 8 “woe” statements found in chapter 23, 23:36 says that particular generation would receive all of what takes place between 23:36 and 24:34. Jesus is in the temple in chapter 23 and he promises its destruction in those two places. He answer, furthermore, all three questions in that context. The sign of the coming of the Son of Man, and the destruction of the temple, and the “end of the age” took place in that generation. But how?

“Generation” in both of these verses can have a range of meanings in a lexicon, but the real question is “How did Matthew use it?” We are not concerned how a translation committee translated it. We want to know if Matthew used it uniformly before now:

*11:16 But whereunto shall I liken **this generation?** It is like unto **children** sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*

Here it seems equally clear that Jesus is asking about people living in his time? Or, perhaps it would be better said that Jesus is addressing folks who were born around the same time. With the word “this” he identifies those who were born around the same time and lived in His day.

*12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous **generation** seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with **this generation**, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. 42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with **this generation**, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

Same as the last time: If “this generation” were making a slam on...say...the ethnic Jews, then what's the point of Solomon—a Jew—showing up to give account at a trial whereat the Queen of the South is serving as a witness against him as well? Contextually, it must mean “those living in the time of Christ.”

What I'm trying to say is that there is no evidence that Matthew ever uses the words "this generation" to mean anything other than those who lived during a particular time—Jesus' time. The "woes" of Matthew 23 are on the people in that generation, but then Jesus shifts himself to view a group that is thousands of years old? Of course not. History tells that the Jewish people paid dearly in "great tribulation" at A.D. 70.

So here, in Matthew 13, we're hearing about a "harvesting of the tares" that takes place in Jesus' generation? This is hard, but we can't really believe that, all of the sudden, Jesus changed meanings of the exact same word He's been using all along.

"This" & "that" are quite different, moreover. Therefore, to say that Jesus is talking about those living in a generation a long ways off when He speaks of "this generation" is highly artificial.

However, it is still very difficult to say that the "harvest of the end of the world" occurred in A.D. 70 since the passing of that *aion* brought with it a new age/*aion* of "everlasting life" (Mark 10:30). If the "end of the age" occurred in A.D. 70, then "eternal/everlasting life" could not occur until then. A sort of mystical age began then? Seems rather far-fetched.

One possibility is that this is one of those "already/not yet" things. In other words, the "harvest of the end of the world" was as good as done, but it was not yet done in real time. This is a lot like Calvary where Jesus was "slain before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20), yet it still had to occur in time. However, Matthew treats nothing else like this in his gospel, so it seems like a stretch.

Another possibility is that Jesus was merely speaking "expectantly" but not "exactly." That is to say that He was expecting to come in the way that Paul was expecting Him to come. In Matthew 24, Jesus denies knowing the day or hour of His return. So why is this not the best explanation? It is hard to imagine Jesus was somewhat wrong about the generation of His return.

It could be that Jesus was only answering one or two of the three questions. That's one explanation. In other words, maybe Jesus was only speaking of when the temple was destroyed. It alone would occur in that generation, but His coming and the "end of the age" was not confirmed as being in that generation at all. This is hard to swallow, though, that Jesus would be misleading His disciples by leading them to believe that He is answering all three questions in 24:3, but He wasn't.

Now, what if the "end of the age" began in the generation of Jesus but the "end of the age" was not fully completed in that generation? That is to say, "what if the age is still ending?" Since Mark 10 tells us that the "age to come" brings everlasting life, this seems necessary. It fulfills both the need for it to occur "in that generation" and for it to bring with it an age for which we still await. Let's read on and see how this works.

13:40

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 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; If the end of the age is still occurring, that means that little by little, by the watchful hand of our Father through His angels, tares are being removed from the kingdom. By the time we arrive at "the last day" (John 11), the kingdom has no imposters.

If I was alone on this interpretation of a long-time removal of tares from the wheat, I would not believe me. However, 1 Corinthians 10:11 seems to say that Paul's generation saw "the end of the ages." Then there is the writer of Hebrews. Hebrews 9:26 says that Jesus actually died in the "end of the ages." Seems strange, I know. If Jesus said it was to happen in His generation, and the Hebrews writer said it, and Paul said it...then I don't have a problem saying the tares are being removed and will finally be thrown into the furnace of fire.