

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 3:5-12.**
- B. Threshing is the process by which the grain is separated from the straw. The stalks are laid out on a threshing floor when they can be pounded and exposed to the wind.
- C. This floor was a circular spot of hard ground 50-100 feet in diameter. Such floors were usually permanent and became well known spots. The floor was usually located at the edge or gate of a village and was owned either communally or privately (1Kgs. 22:10).
Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them.
- D. Tonight's lesson is a subject study on the impact of the threshing floor as found in the Bible, and how this NT metaphor affects present day Xians.

I. DEFINITIONS AND TERMS.

- A. The grain was reaped by use of the sickle, or pulled up by the roots and gathered into sheaves or heaps.
- B. The sheaves were carted to the threshing floor (Am. 2:13).
"Behold, I am weighted down beneath you As a wagon is weighted down when filled with sheaves."
- C. Several different methods were used to thresh the grain:
 - 1. On these floors oxen trampled out the grain; a process used by the Egyptians as well as the Hebrews (Deut. 25:4; 1Tim. 5:18).
*(Deut. 25:4) "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing."
(1Tim. 5:18) For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*
 - 2. When there was a small quantity stalks were beaten with a stick or flail (Jud. 6:11).
Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites.
 - 3. Sometimes used was a threshing cart. This was a frame with rollers into which were fastened sharp stones or pieces of metal (Isa. 28:27,28).
For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.
 - 4. At a later time, the Jews used a threshing sledge called a *morag* (Isa. 28:27; 41:15; 2Sam. 24:22; 1Chr. 21:23). This *morag* was a stage consisting of 3 rollers ridged with iron, which, aided by the driver's weight, crushed out, often inuring the grain, was well as cut or tore the straw which became fit for fodder.
*(Isa 28:27) For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; But dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.
(Isa 41:15) "Behold, I have made you a new, sharp threshing sledge with double edges; You will thresh the mountains, and pulverize them, And will make the hills like chaff.
(2Sam 24:16) When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity, and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.
(1Chr 21:20-23) Now Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. And Ornan was threshing wheat. 21 And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out from the threshing floor, and prostrated himself before David with his face to the ground. 22 Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of this threshing floor, that I may build on it an altar to the LORD; for the full price you shall give it to me, that the plague may be restrained from the people." 23 And Ornan said to David, "Take it for yourself; and let my lord the king do what is good in his sight. See, I will give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for wood and the wheat for the grain offering; I will give it all."*
- D. Both the threshing cart, and threshing sledge were pulled by animals.

II. OT REFERENCES.

- A. The threshing floor was a well-known place, wherever they may have been located. Joseph and his family mourned for their deceased father, Jacob at the threshing floor (Gen. 50:10-11).
When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father. **11]** Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians." Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.
- B. The threshing floor was connected with various sacrificial offerings (Num. 15:20; 18:27; Deut. 15:14; 16:13).
(**Num 15:20**) 'Of the first of your dough you shall lift up a cake as an offering; as the offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it up.
(**Num 18:27**) 'And your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat.
(**Deut 15:14**) "You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you."
(**Deut 16:13**) "You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat;..."
- C. Gideon was grinding wheat when he received his great call from the angel of the Lord. And his famous fleece test took place on the threshing floor (Jud. 6:11, 37).
(**Jud 6:11, 37**) Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites... **37** "...behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken."
- D. Ruth made herself available for service to Boaz around the threshing floor (Ruth 3:2-3,6,14).
(**Ruth 3:2-3, 6, 14**) "And now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maids you were? Behold, he winnows barley at the threshing floor tonight. **3** "Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking... **6** So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her... **14** So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."
- E. Uzzah tries to steady the ark of the covenant while on a threshing floor (2Sam. 6:6; 1Chr. 13:9).
(**2Sam 6:6**) But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it.
(**1Chr 13:9**) When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset it.
- F. David numbers the army of Israel which greatly displeased God. God allowed David to choose the punishment upon the nation for his sin (either 3 years of famine, or 3 months of capture by David's enemies, or 3 days of pestilence). David chose for the plague. However, after 70,000 men fell, God stopped the destroying angel at the threshing floor of Ornan (1Chr. 21:15).
And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
- G. David sacrifices on the threshing floor of Araunah which will later become the sight of Solomon's temple (2Sam. 24:18,21-22,24; 2Chr. 3:1).
(**2Sam 24:18**) So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."
(**2Sam 24:21-22, 24**) Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be held back from the people." **22** And Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood... **24** However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.
(**2Chr 3:1**) Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

- H. The prophets used the familiarity of the threshing floor to speak of the coming judgment on their peoples by God (Isa. 21:10; 27:12; Jer. 51:33; Hos. 13:3; Mic. 4:12).
 (Isa 21:10) O my threshed people, and my afflicted of the threshing floor! What I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I make known to you.
 (Isa 27:12) And it will come about in that day, that the LORD will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt; and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.
 (Jer 51:33) For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor At the time it is stamped firm; Yet in a little while the time of harvest will come for her."
 (Hosea 13:3) Therefore, they will be like the morning cloud, And like dew which soon disappears, Like chaff which is blown away from the threshing floor, And like smoke from a chimney.
 (Micah 4:12) "But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, And they do not understand His purpose; For He has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.
- I. But the prophets did not have all bad news, there was to be blessings at the threshing floors for those who obeyed the Lord (Dan. 2:35; Joel 2:24).
 (Dan 2:35) "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."
 (Joel 2:24) ...the threshing floors will be full of grain, And the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil.

III. NT REFERENCES.

- A. Two of the 4 NT references to the threshing floor are quotes from the OT (1Cor. 9:9; 1Tim. 5:18).
 (1Cor 9:9) For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He?
 (1Tim 5:18) For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."
- B. The main point of this lesson about the threshing floor is that Jesus will return and clear the threshing floor ONCE AND FOR ALL! His return marks the great judgment to come when the good will be separated from the bad for all eternity (Mt. 3:12; Lk. 3:17).
 (Mt 3:12) "And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
 (Lk 3:17) "And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
- C. Notice the many metaphorical applications in this verse:
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| 1. The winnowing fork (fan)... | the judgment. |
| 2. The wheat... | the just. |
| 3. The chaff... | the wicked. |
| 4. The fire... | Gehenna (hell) in which the wicked perish. |
| 5. The threshing floor... | Palestine or the world. |
| 6. The one with the fork... | the Lord, Judge of all the earth (Jn. 5:26,27). |

IV. APPLICATIONS.

- A. The threshing floor is associated with destruction and crushing (2Kgs. 13:7).
 For he left to Jehoahaz of the army not more than fifty horsemen and ten chariots and 10,000 footmen, for the king of Aram had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing.
- B. The threshing floor was in some ways a hated place, for the nations' rulers knew that they could not find help there (2Kgs. 6:27).
 And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, from where shall I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the wine press?"
- C. Those who are wise will look at life and use a threshing floor to separate good from bad (Prv. 20:26).
 A wise king winnows (sifts) the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The threshing floor is not the place that you want to meet Jesus--unprepared!
 B. The threshing floor is a place of judgment where the guilty are crush and destroyed.

- C. The threshing floor is also a place of salvation where the faithful decide to be just that, ready to do God's will.
- D. Are you ready to meet Jesus on the threshing floor?
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.