

Matthew 13:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

Analysis

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this (ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῦτο ἐποίησεν)—the master immediately identifies the source: not negligence, not defective seed, but hostile action. Jesus's interpretation (v. 39) clarifies: **the enemy is the devil**. This absolves God of evil's origin while asserting His sovereign control—evil operates only by permission within parameters God sets.

The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? (θέλεις οὖν ἀπελθόντες συλλέξωμεν αὐτά;)—the servants' zealous desire to purge tares reflects human impulse toward immediate judgment. They want instant justice, pure community, visible separation. The question 'Wilt thou?' acknowledges the master's authority while advocating aggressive action. This represents immature zeal that would 'root up' questionable members rather than exercise patience until final judgment.

Historical Context

The enemy's covert sowing reflects real agricultural sabotage in the ancient world, documented in Roman law (Twelve Tables). Spiritually, this addresses first-century questions about why Messiah's kingdom includes false disciples—shouldn't Messiah purge all evil immediately? The servants' eagerness to 'gather them up' mirrors Jewish expectations of Messiah's immediate judgment, which Jesus's parable corrects by introducing delay until harvest.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does identifying Satan as the enemy of God's work change your understanding of evil's presence in the church?
2. Where do you see the servants' zealous desire to 'gather up tares'—impatient judgment that won't wait for God's timing?
3. What balance must church leaders strike between purity and patience—addressing clear evil while allowing time for unclear cases?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	ἔφη	αὐτά	Ἐχθρὸς	ἄνθρωπος	τοῦτο	ἐποίησεν
G3588	G1161	He said	them	An enemy	G444	this	hath done
		G5346	G846	G2190		G5124	G4160
οἱ	δὲ	δοῦλοι	εἶπον	αὐτά	Θέλεις	οὖν	ἀπελθόντες
G3588	G1161	The servants	said	them	Wilt thou	then	that we go
		G1401	G2036	G846	G2309	G3767	G565
συλλέξωμεν	αὐτά						
and gather	them						
G4816	G846						