

Matthew 13:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Analysis

But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them (οὐ, μήποτε συλλέγοντες τὰ ζιζάνια ἐκριζώσητε ἀμα αὐτοῖς τὸν σῖτον)—ekrizōsēte means 'to uproot completely.' The master forbids premature judgment because darnel and wheat roots intertwine underground; pulling tares damages wheat. This reveals divine wisdom: overzealous purging harms genuine believers. Human judgment lacks omniscience—we cannot perfectly distinguish tares from wheat, especially before fruit-bearing reveals character.

This doesn't prohibit church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5) but forbids inquisitorial purges seeking absolute purity before final judgment. The parable teaches patience, not passivity; discernment, not naïveté. Final separation awaits harvest (v. 30)—God's judgment, not human effort, will perfectly divide wheat from tares. Until then, the visible church contains both regenerate and unregenerate, known only to God (2 Timothy 2:19).

Historical Context

Darnel's root system indeed intertwined with wheat roots, making separation before harvest impractical—farmers waited until both were fully mature, then separated during threshing. Jesus applies this agricultural reality to ecclesiology: the visible church will always be 'mixed' until final judgment. This corrected Jewish expectations of immediate messianic purging, preparing disciples for a long church age before consummation.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this parable guard against witch-hunt mentality in churches—zealous purges that harm genuine believers?
2. What wisdom does 'lest ye root up wheat' provide for dealing with questionable members whose true nature isn't yet clear?
3. Where must you exercise patience rather than judgment—trusting God's final harvest to separate wheat from tares?

Interlinear Text

ο	δέ	ἔφη,	Οὐ	μήποτε	συλλέγοντες	τὰ	ζιζάνια
G3588	But	he said	Nay	lest	while ye gather up	G3588	the tares
G1161	G5346	G3756	G3379		G4816		G2215
ἐκριζώσητε	ἄμα	αὐτοῖς	τὸν	σῖτον			
ye root up	with	them	G3588	also the wheat			
G1610	G260	G846		G4621			

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