

Matthew 13:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Analysis

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. This parable of wheat and tares addresses the mixed nature of the visible church and God's final judgment. 'Let both grow together' (ἄφετε συναυξάνεσθαι ἀμφότερα/aphete synauxanesthai amphotera)—God's sovereign decision to allow believers and unbelievers to coexist in this age.

The 'tares' (ζιζάνια/zizania) are likely darnel, a weed resembling wheat until maturity. In the visible church, false professors look like genuine believers initially; only time and fruit reveal the difference (Matthew 7:20). Jesus explains this parable: the field is the world, wheat are 'children of the kingdom,' tares are 'children of the wicked one,' sown by the devil (Matthew 13:37-39).

'Until the harvest' (ἔως τοῦ θερισμοῦ/heōs tou therismou)—the harvest is 'the end of the world' (συντέλεια τοῦ αἰώνος/synteleia tou aiōnos, verse 39). God patiently allows the present mixed state, not because He cannot distinguish wheat from tares, but because removing tares prematurely might uproot wheat. Some who appear to be tares may yet be converted; hasty church discipline could harm genuine believers.

Yet judgment is certain: 'in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers'—at the appointed time, God will command separation. Tares will be 'bound in bundles to burn'—gathered for destruction, experiencing hell's eternal fire (Matthew 13:41-42). Wheat will be gathered 'into my barn'—brought safely to eternal glory. This should comfort believers under persecution (the church endures Satan's attacks) while warning false professors that final separation approaches.

Historical Context

Ancient farming involved broadcast sowing by hand. Enemies sometimes sabotaged crops by sowing weed seeds among grain—a malicious act Jesus's audience would recognize. Roman law actually prohibited this practice, showing its prevalence.

This parable addresses the disciples' expectation that Messiah's kingdom would immediately purge wickedness. Jesus teaches that the kingdom comes in two stages: already (inaugurated through His first coming) and not yet (consummated at His return). The church age is characterized by coexistence of believers and unbelievers until the final judgment.

Throughout church history, some groups have claimed to be pure churches, excluding all but the manifestly elect. But this parable teaches the impossibility of perfect church purity in this age. Only God perfectly knows His own; human judgment may err.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this parable challenge both excessive leniency (tolerating clear sin) and excessive harshness (judging others' salvation) in the church?

2. What comfort does this parable offer to believers who live in a world where evil seems to flourish alongside good?
3. How should the certainty of final harvest and separation affect our evangelism, our patience with immature believers, and our own pursuit of holiness?

Interlinear Text

ἄφετε συναυξάνεσθαι ἀμφότερα μέχρι τοῦ θερισμοῦ καὶ
 Let grow together both until G3588 of harvest and G2326 G2532
 G863 G4885 G297 G3360 G2326 G2532

ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ θερισμοῦ ἐρῶ τοῖς θερισταῖς
 in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers
 G1722 G2540 G3588 G2326 G2046 G3588 G2327
 G1722 G2540 G3588 G2326 G2046 G3588 G2327

Συλλέξατε πρῶτον τὰ ζιζάνια καὶ δήσατε αὐτά εἰς
 Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in
 G4816 G4412 G3588 G2215 G2532 G1210 G846 G1519
 G4816 G4412 G3588 G2215 G2532 G1210 G846 G1519

δέσμας πρὸς τὸ κατακαῦσαι αὐτά τὸν δὲ σῖτον
 bundles to burn them but the wheat
 G1197 G4314 G3588 G2618 G846 G3588 G1161 G4621
 G1197 G4314 G3588 G2618 G846 G3588 G1161 G4621

συναγάγετε εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην μου
 gather in barn my
 G4863 G1519 G3588 G596 G3450
 G4863 G1519 G3588 G596 G3450

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 3:12 (Parallel theme): Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

1 Timothy 5:24 (Parallel theme): Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

1 Corinthians 4:5 (Parallel theme): Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

John 15:6 (Parallel theme): If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Matthew 25:32 (Parallel theme): And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

Matthew 25:41 (Parallel theme): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Luke 3:17 (Parallel theme): Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.