

Matthew 13:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Analysis

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world (ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, en tē synteleía tou aiōnos toutou). The comparison is explicit: just as farmers inevitably separated darnel from wheat at harvest and burned the poisonous weeds, divine judgment will separate false professors from true believers at the eschaton.

The burning is not annihilation but punishment—fire imagery consistently represents conscious judgment in Scripture (v. 42, 50; Matthew 25:41). The aorist passive **are gathered** (συλλέγεται, syllegetai) emphasizes the thoroughness of the harvest—no tares escape, no wheat is lost. This parable demolishes universalism and challenges easy-believism: not everyone who appears to be 'planted' in the kingdom truly belongs to Christ.

Historical Context

Jewish apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period (200 BC - AD 70) frequently used harvest and fire imagery for final judgment (cf. 4 Ezra, 1 Enoch). Jesus draws on these familiar themes but personalizes them—He is the Lord of the harvest (Matthew 9:38) who will execute judgment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the inevitability of tare-burning challenge contemporary reluctance to speak of divine judgment?
2. What distinguishes you as 'wheat' rather than 'tares'—external religious behavior or internal spiritual reality?
3. How should the certainty of final separation affect your urgency in gospel proclamation?

Interlinear Text

ὅσπερ	οὖν	συλλέγεται	τὰ	ζιζάνια	καὶ	πυρὶ
As	therefore	are gathered		the tares	and	in the fire
G5618	G3767	G4816	G3588	G2215	G2532	G4442
κατακαίεται	οὕτως	ἔσται	ἐν	τῇ	συντελείᾳ	τοῦ
burned	so	shall it be	in	G3588	the end	G3588
G2618	G3779	G2071	G1722		G4930	
αἰῶνος	τούτου					
world	of this					
G165	G5127					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 13:39 (Parallel theme): The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.
