

# The Christian Arsenal

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## Parables 03 The Wheat and the Weeds

Matthew 13:24-30, & 36-43

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The parable of the wheat and the weeds continues the same subject that Jesus had introduced in the previous parable of the sower and the seed, but from a little different perspective. This parable focuses on the opposition that the good soil from the previous parable would encounter from the shallow soil and the crowded soil. While the parable of the sower reveals Satan's methods of preventing people from receiving the message of the kingdom, this parable deals with how Satan opposes the sons of the kingdom. This parable goes a step beyond what was revealed in the parable of the sower.

Each of the seven parables found here in Matthew 13 describes a different aspect of what's going to take place during the mystery aspect of the kingdom of heaven, or the present church age. The first parable describes the effect that the "message of the kingdom" has on the different types of hearers while the remaining six parables describe various facets of what the "kingdom of heaven" will be like. Jesus told these parables so that his disciples would understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven and the unbelievers in the crowd would not (Matt.13:11).

READ MATTHEW 13:24-30 (The Parable)

1.) The Parable:

- a.) The weeds that Jesus referred to are a specific type of weed in the Middle East known as Bearded Darnel. It was nearly impossible to distinguish it from wheat until it matured and produced a seed head. The seed head of the bearded darnel is smaller than wheat and the seeds are black. If the seeds of the Bearded Darnel are mixed in with the wheat and then ground into flour, it can produce dizziness and vomiting [1].
- b.) This was not a practical joke. The sowing of Darnel in someone's field of wheat had the potential of destroying the entire crop. The Romans even had a law that specifically addressed this practice making it illegal.
- c.) The word used to describe the enemy sowing the weeds is a word meaning to oversow. This means that this was not just the scattering a few weed seeds, but to plant an entire crop of weeds on top of the existing crop of wheat.
- d.) In a situation like this, a farmer had only two choices. He could either hire a lot of workers to trample through his field picking the Darnel, and save a small portion of his crop, or he could burn his whole field to prevent the Darnel from producing seeds that could accidentally be scattered into his neighbors field.
- e.) The farmer knew that he was in complete control of the situation because time was on his side. He didn't want to damage and lose even one of the wheat plants.

READ MATTHEW 13:36-43 (The Interpretation)

- 2.) The Interpretation: After Jesus told two more parables to the crowds he went into a house with his disciples. Then they asked him to explain the "parable of the weeds".
- a.) The Sower of the good seed – Jesus describes himself as the one who sowed the seed (vs.37) and described the sower as the one who was the owner of the field (vs.24). All of the good seed belongs to him. Jesus said that he would not lose any of those that the Father gave to him (John 6:39).
  - b.) The field – Some have misunderstood this parable and have taught that the field is the church. But that is not what Jesus said. He said that the field is the entire world not the church. It is absolutely critical to remember that this parable and the ones that follow are explaining various aspects of the mystery form of the kingdom of heaven in which believers and unbelievers will coexist. We don't have to interpret Jesus' own

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interpretation. Geographically the kingdom of heaven was not going to remain a local movement in Israel, but was going to go global. If the field were the church then we might draw the conclusion that we are not to exercise church discipline or even contend for doctrinal correctness, or moral purity in the church because it's the angels job to deal with the weeds (or sons of the evil one). A little later Jesus said that if someone refused to repent, he should be thrown out of the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Paul reinforced this teaching when he told the Corinthian Church to "expel the wicked man from among you." (1 Corinthians 5:13) because they had tolerated someone in the church who was openly living in disobedience.

- c.) The good seed – The sons of the kingdom. In the previous parable the seed was the message of the kingdom. Here the seed is the product of the message that was sown in good soil. In other words these are not character traits, but people. There are only two kinds of seed in view here. Everyone is either a result of good seed or bad seed. The same way that everybody's hearts are either good soil that was prepared for the word of the kingdom or bad soil that is not.
- d.) The weeds – The sons of the evil one. This isn't referring to every unbeliever. Jesus has in mind those sons of the evil one who look like the sons of the kingdom. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from the true sons of the kingdom but there is an indication of which ones are and which ones aren't when you see the fruit (Matt.7:20) or the lack of it in their lives. The sad thing is that the people who Jesus portrays as the weeds don't even know that they are not the sons of the kingdom. Paul was disturbed by the report he received about those at the church in Corinth and told them to examine themselves to see whether they are truly in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). One of Satan's strategies is to delude some people into thinking that they are God's people and thereby giving them a false sense of security. There were even false Apostles who attempted to gain a following among the churches in the first century (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).
- e.) The enemy – The devil (Satan himself). Although Satan intends the weeds to destroy the crop they can actually cause the wheat to become stronger. The wheat will send their roots deeper as a result. The enemy planted these weeds while men slept. This isn't meant to suggest that if the men had stayed awake that the enemy wouldn't have been able to do this. It simply means that he did it while nobody was looking, or in secret.
- f.) The harvest – The end of the age. God extends His patience towards unbelievers in the hope that they may become sons of the kingdom before the harvest. The inquisition is a sad chapter of history in which the institutional church killed Muslims, Jews, and heretics in an attempt to Christianize the world. When John complained to Jesus that a man, who was not one of them, was casting out demons in Jesus' name, Jesus told them that whoever is not against you is for you (Luke 9:49-50). Also, when some Samaritans, who rejected Jesus, made things difficult for them, the disciples requested that Jesus empower them to call down fire from heaven to destroy them (Luke 9:51-56) but Jesus rebuked his disciples for not understanding that he had come to save men lives, not destroy them.
- g.) The harvesters – The harvest is at the end of this age, and the angels will be the ones doing the reaping where they will cast the weeds into the lake of fire. The wheat doesn't do any reaping. This parable covers the time period from when Jesus was on earth sowing the good seed until the end of this present age. This "mystery period" of the kingdom will not result in the universal triumph of the gospel as some have suggested, nor does it include His future 1000 year earthly reign. The description of the final judgment being a "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is a fact that is repeatedly emphasized by Jesus in the Gospels.

### 3.) Conclusion:

Some have suggested that the weeds are social issues such as abortion, homosexuality, sex and violence on TV, drugs, alcoholism, and human rights issues. Therefore the church shouldn't be involved in moral issues. Many of God's people refuse get involved in opposing these issues because they think that they aren't supposed to. Now, there is a danger if the church gets out of

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balance and makes political activism its primary purpose. But as children of the kingdom, Jesus said that we are to be salt and light in our world (Matt.5:13-16). The good and the bad seed are not things, or issues, they are people.

These weeds that were sown among the wheat have in some cases even taken up leadership positions among the wheat. The New Testament Epistles are filled with warnings about these imitators. When Paul called the elders of Ephesus together for the last time, he told them that “...*after my departure grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from your own company men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*” (Acts 20:29-30). These imitation Christians will not only infiltrate local churches from the outside, but they will also promote their damnable heresies from within the Church.

There are some folks who profess their allegiance to Christianity who are not Christians. This should not surprise those of us who are. We are not to seek the destruction of the weeds but are to leave them alone. As long as they're alive on this earth they still have an opportunity to respond to God's offer of forgiveness, and be saved. With this in mind, we should not become discouraged by the lack of commitment we might see in others who claim to be Christians. Some of them may not be sons of the kingdom. But we should also be careful not to judge others by what we think they should be doing for God. We could easily mistake someone who is immature, or in need of a little encouragement as someone who is not a child of God. This parable can help us keep our perspective if we realize that not everybody who professes to embrace Christianity necessarily has a personal relationship with Jesus as their savior. It can not be overemphasized that the kingdom of heaven is NOT the Church of Jesus Christ. Unbelievers have associated themselves with local Christian assemblies from the time of the Apostles until now, but they are not a part of the true Church that is also known as the “Body of Christ” (Eph. 1:22-23). These “children of the wicked one” look so much like the “children of the kingdom” that only the angels will be able to distinguish the two groups.