

Introduction

Jesus explained the meaning of this parable and The Parable of the Soils. By examining these two parables along with Jesus' interpretations, we can see how to interpret the other parables of Jesus.

The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds is sometimes called the Parable of the Tares. It is also classified as one of the Parables of the Kingdom. It is found only in Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43.

The Story

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

"'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

"'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'" (Matthew 13:24-30, New International Version).

Jesus tells a simple story of a farmer who planted wheat in his field. During the night, his enemy deliberately "oversowed" his wheat with darnel (tares), a kind of weed that looks like wheat when it first comes up. When the wheat began to head out, the weeds became apparent. The farmer's servants asked, **"Then do you want us to go and gather them [the weeds]"?** (Matthew 13:28, Revised Standard Version). He told his servants to wait until the harvest and he would have the reapers to gather the weeds first and bundle them to be burned. Then his reapers would gather the wheat into his barn.

See G. Campbell Morgan, D.D., *The Parables and Metaphors of Our Lord* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1943), pp. 49-54, for a thorough treatment of this parable, that he calls "The Darnel."

The Interpretation

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

The Wheat and Weeds

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He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seeds stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13:36-43, New International Version).

After Jesus went to the house where he was staying, his disciples asked him to explain the parable. The characters in the story and the real persons that they represent are as follows:

1. Sower of good seed.....Son of Man (Jesus himself)
2. Sower of weeds.....the devil
3. Servants of farmer.....mature Christians
4. Good seeds.....sons of the Kingdom
5. Field.....the world
6. Weeds.....sons of the devil
7. Reapers.....angels
8. Harvest.....close of the age.

The phrase "Son of man" is a title of the Messiah. It emphasizes Jesus' humanity. He is also called "The Son of God" in the scriptures. It is interesting to note that Jesus used a particular name of Satan here. The word translated "devil" is *diabolos*, which means "accuser or slanderer." [W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Unabridged ed. (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.), s.v., "Devil, Devilish"].

Here is a diagram of the dual dynamic:

Jesus → Word of God → Children of God

Devil → Word Substitute → Children of the Evil One

The phrase, "sons of the Kingdom," is a Hebraism that refers to "those who partake of the nature of the Kingdom [of God]," that is, those who partake of the nature of God.

Likewise, "sons of the wicked one," means those who partake of the nature of the Liar or

Slanderer, Satan. These are liars or hypocrites who look like Christians but are not.

Both Jesus and Satan are busy sowing. Jesus is sowing the Word of God. Satan is sowing substitutes for the Word of God. Jesus is producing human offspring having the nature of God. Satan is producing human offspring having the nature of himself. Society is becoming more polarized.

Christians are forbidden to try to destroy unbelievers. I believe that this means that Christians are not to antagonize unbelievers in any way. It means that the so-called "holy wars" of the institutional church were wrong. Attempting to do the work of God with the arm of the flesh is wrong. "Conversion with the sword" is wrong and also impossible. Somewell said it well:

**One convinced against his will
Remains unconvinced still.**

When some Samaritans rejected Jesus, James and John were ready to destroy them:

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. [And he said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."] And they went to another village.

(Luke 9:51-56, New International Version).

Jesus' teaching here and elsewhere is that it is God's will that the "sons of the wicked one" become the "sons of the Kingdom." If believers uproot them now, they may never become believers. Unfortunately, some true believers would also become uprooted.

At the end of this age, the Lord will commission angels to remove the incorrigible, hardened, wicked people and place them in God's prison. The angels will also usher believers into God's presence, where they will be forever with their Lord.

Please note that this parable has nothing to do with local church discipline. The church is to correct believers who get out of line.

Central Truth

We are not to have a condemning attitude towards unbelievers or attempt to harm them in any way. (Implied in this parable and based on other Scriptures, we are to love and do good to all people, including unbelievers.)

Conclusion

It is important for us as believers to be about our Father's business. We must allow ourselves to be motivated by the same love of God that motivated Jesus. We must have his attitude:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16-17, New International Version).

Then we must put this love into action, especially in sowing the good seed of God's Word and winning people to God through Christ.

Part I, Chapter 2 of my eBook, *The Astonishing Parables of Jesus*. Download this book free at <http://BusterSoft.com/JRCM/>

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—Peter Meiderlin 1626

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