

File No. 125

MATTHEW 13:24–30, 36–43

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

(SBS Bk 5 Story No 4)

Story Notes

Christ is the worker in this parable, and he is 'planting' sons of the kingdom, those who hear his word. From this planting, there will be a harvest of sons who will 'shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'

Satan opposes this by planting his own sons in the midst of Christ's planting.

The servants who want to root out the weeds, highlight the strange nature of Christ's kingdom. Why would Jesus let 'weeds' remain while his sons came to maturity?

In private, the disciples asked what this meant, and Jesus showed that the angels would readily deal with the 'weeds' and that the harvest would be certain and glorious. Every one who was a cause of sin or a doer of evil would be removed at that time.

Peter would soon be described as a cause of sin (Matt. 16:23), and, if weeding was done too soon, he would be excluded. Followers of Christ must believe in the work he accomplished on the cross to have hope of entering the kingdom.

However, the certainty of a coming harvest is the confidence that servants of the kingdom need. Waiting, when things appear to be going wrong, is only possible if we remember the patience and hope that Christ teaches here. The danger in 'weeding' too soon would be that damage would come to those who proved to be true sons of the kingdom.

Jesus, even as he told this story, was showing patience with Israel. The nation had been born as a kingdom of God (Exod. 19:6) but other lords had come to reign over them (Isa. 26:13). They had become as those over whom God had never reigned (Isa. 63:18-19). Jesus looked at what God had planted and saw it over sown with sons of the devil (cf. John 8:44). He had come to gather the wheat into the silo (Matt 3:12), but not until the time of harvest had come.

Psalm 78 is also a 'parable' or 'dark sayings'. It recounts the faithful and gracious rule of God, the rebellion of Israel against that rule and God's faithfulness in giving them David to lead them in victory. Jesus was now that 'David', but, of necessity, had to speak in veiled terms so that only those to whom it was given to hear would understand.

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