

The Life of Christ

The Parables of Jesus Christ - The Parable of the Tares (Only in Matthew)

Matthew 13:24-30 The Parable of the Tares (NOT just "weeds" – NIV, ESV)



Tares - Darnel
(*Lolium temulentum*)

Wheat
(*Triticum cereale*)

The Darnel is... a species of rye grass (*Lolium temulentum*). The seeds are a strong soporific **poison**... (both grow) plentifully in Syria and Palestine... In its earlier stages it is **indistinguishable** from the wheat stalks so that it has to remain until near the harvest. Modern farmers are gaining more skill in weeding it out."

- Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament

A picture of false Christians in the Church – does that make sense in the historical setting? It does if you remember why He's using parables and what is ahead for His disciples! Almost all the Epistles deal with false teachers in the church.

1. vs. 24 – The kingdom of heaven, i.e. not the earthly millennial kingdom = all of the saved.
2. vs 25 – An active enemy; Discuss
3. vs. 28-29 – Not handling the problem – Why not, in our application?
4. vs. 30 – Handling the problem; Discuss – There is a Judgment!

Matthew 13:36-43 Jesus Explains the Parable of the Tares

Note: The explanation is not until after 2 more parables, and after a page turn, part of the reason for using commentaries!

Listening to Jesus' explanation, it sounds like it (generally) could apply to false religions as well, but people, not religions, will face judgment.

Notice the order of events, tares first, this is not rapture then tribulation, but is final judgment – Revelation 20:10-21:4

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32)



We need to read (often footnoted) Ezekiel 17:22-24 (11-24)

This is not only a picture of the church starting small and growing huge, but, if we consider Jesus to be quoting Ezekiel, the picture takes on even greater meaning.

1. In Ezekiel, Zedekiah rebels against God and allies with Egypt – God says He's going to wipe them out except for scattered survivors,
2. Then in Ezekiel, after the failure of Zedekiah, God talks about planning a sprig, and it growing a high tree.
3. Then we see that Jesus is comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to this cedar sprig in his parable of the mustard seed – as both come from very little to become great.
4. If we consider Jesus as the sower, as He was in the last parable, He reflects God's work in Ezekiel 17, after the failure of Israel (Matthew 11:14).

- OR -

Some hold the birds in the parable to represent evil, as they did in the parable of the sower (and in the Pharaoh's baker's dream), causing them to represent the same element as the tares in the previous parable.

- BUT -

The element of the birds cannot be interpreted this way in regard to Ezekiel, because that is God's tree, and provision for the birds is expressed positively - so it's one or the other, but not both.

IN THIS CASE, either interpretation could be contextually and theologically appropriate, but in context with the parables of the Sower, the Tares, and the next parable, The Leaven, I favor the interpretation which ignores Ezekiel 17.