

## Pentecost IX: Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43: Weeds in the Wheat

1. The parables beginning with vss. 24, 31, 33 were spoken to the multitude and the disciples. The parables beginning with vss. 44, 45, 47 were spoken only to the disciples. All six are about the Kingdom of heaven, what we call the Kingdom of grace here on earth. The six parables treat various features of this kingdom.
2. Vs. 24: ἄλλην means "another" not "different". These parables are not different in that they treat different subjects. All of them treat the Kingdom of heaven from different points of view. It's somewhat like the various facets of a diamond. Only this parable begins with ὁμοιωθή. The other five begin with ὁμοία ἐστίν. But the two expressions are synonymous. Six of our translations (LB TEV NIV NEB NKJV AAT) read "is like". τῶν οὐρανῶν is adjectival, telling us what kind of kingdom. It could also be called subjective, for it comes from heaven. And also objective, for it ends in heaven. Of course, the damned will not be in heaven but neither were they true members of the kingdom while on earth. καλόν, good, useful, profitable, productive.
3. Vs. 25: ἐν introduces a subordinate adverbial clause denoting time. τοῦς ἀνθρώπους is the subject of the infinitive καθεύδειν. τοῦς is generic. τοῦς ἀνθρώπους means "people". The point of the clause is that the enemy worked in a stealthy fashion at night when no one was aware of it. ὁ ἐχθρὸς is plainly "his enemy" the enemy of the sower in vs. 1. The prefix ἐπι in the verb denotes additional sowing. ζιζάνια is variously translated "tares, weeds, darnel, thistles". The point is that ζιζάνια is very difficult to distinguish from true wheat. ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σίτου means "everywhere among the wheat". καὶ ἀπήλθεν implies that the enemy did not want people to know that he had been there.
4. Vs. 26: Here is the rendering of seven translations:  
AV: But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit  
RSV: So when the plants came up and bore grain  
TEV: When the plants grew and the heads of grain began to form  
NIV: When the wheat sprouted and formed heads  
JB: When the new wheat sprouted and ripened  
NEB: When the corn sprouted and began to fill out (British "corn" is "wheat")  
NASB: When the wheat sprang up and bore grain  
τότε means "then first". The point is the craftiness with which the enemy had operated. ἐφ' ὧν "there appeared". This is what caused the workers distress. καὶ is "also".
5. Vs. 27: προσελθόντες, they did nothing on their own but consulted their master. This is proved by the fact that they call him κύριε. οὐχὶ introduces a question which expects the answer "yes". The first question does not denote doubt as is proved by the second question. οὖν is inferential meaning "in view of this fact". They practically ask: "How can it be that the field has phony wheat?" They are distressed.
6. Vs. 28: In the first sentence of this verse the omniscience of the Lord begins to be evident. He knew though no one else knew. The question of the slaves is: "In view of this underhanded act, is it your will that we go and gather up the phony wheat?" They are letting it entirely up to him. συλλέξωμεν is deliberative subjunctive, which indicates that they don't know the answer.
7. Vs. 29: οὐ with an acute accent means "NO". συλλέγοντες denotes attendant circumstance. ἐκριζώσητε does not mean "might pull up" (TEV JB NEB) or "may root up" (NIV NASB AAT) but "will root up" (AV RSV NKJV). The verb is subjunctive because of μήποτε in a negative purpose

clause. The point is that their action would be entirely harmful. His whole concern is with the σίτον and it is implied that the ζιζάνια will not harm the σίτον. He is saying: "Don't be rash."

8. Vs. 30: ἄφετε must always be translated contextually. Here it is "allow". συναυξάνεσθαι "to grow side by side". Note that both are growing but for entirely different purposes. ἐν is temporal. τοῦ θερισμοῦ is adjectival. ἐρῶ, the Master is in complete control. Note the play on θερισμός and θεριστής. συλλέξατε, here impv. In 28 it was deliberative subjunctive denoting bewilderment. In vs. 30 it denotes that no harm will be done to the wheat. δῆσατε αὐτὰ εἰς δεσμός, the point is so that none escape. Note the play on words. πρὸς introduces a purpose clause. κατὰ is intensive "to burn completely". συλλέξατε means "pick out" but συναγάγετε means "gather together". εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην μου, he places high value on the wheat which will be safely stored.
9. Vs. 36: The third and fourth Kingdom parables were spoken before Jesus dismissed the multitudes. οἴκων, the same house as in 13:1, likely denotes Jesus' home in Capernaum, the place where He stayed. Nowhere is it said that He owned a house. Now He is alone with the disciples. It would seem that the third and fourth parables needed no further explanation. τῶν ζιζανίων is adjectival. τοῦ ἀγροῦ is locative. Six of our translations render διασάφησον "explain". ἡμῖν is dative of advantage. Note that in Jesus' answer both subject and predicate are articular. "The Son of man" denotes the incarnate Christ, man and yet more than man. Jesus Himself sowed the good seed and still does through His ministers and laymen.
10. Vs. 38: Note that, as in vs. 37, we have three sets of articular subjects and predicates. In the parable of the Sower the seed represented the Gospel, the life-giving Word. In this parable the seed is "the sons of the Kingdom", those who are spiritually alive because of the Son of man. τῆς βασιλείας is adjectival telling us what kind of sons. υἱοῖς is variously translated "children, people, sons, subjects". τοῦ πονηροῦ is both adjectival and subjective and is surely masculine "of the actively wicked one". κακός denotes a state. But πονηρός means "actively evil".
11. Vs. 39: Note another set of articular subject and predicate. "The enemy" means "the one who hates the Lord," as is clear from vs. 25. ὁ διάβολος needs no explanation. By the way, "the children of the actively evil one" in vs. 38 does not mean unregenerate man in general but the hypocrites who appear to the Christian but actually are not. They are the products of the devil. Judas was a hypocrite. Read Jn. 6:70,71; 13:2; 13:27. God did not predestine Judas to damnation. Judas rejected the shield of faith to ward off the fiery missiles of Satan (Eph. 6:16). He did not resist the devil and therefore the devil did not flee (James 4:7). But Judas covered his wickedness so completely that, even after a clear indication from Jesus (Jn. 13:21-30), the eleven evidently still did not know or believe who the betrayer was.
12. Vs. 40: οὖν "therefore" introduces the point of comparison indicated by the correlatives ὡςπερ and οὕτως. In the ὡςπερ clause the two verbs are present tense. The verb in the οὕτως clause is future, from figure to reality. ἐν is temporal. "The consummation of the age" means that point at which all, without exception, will be judged.
13. Vs. 41: In vs. 37 the Son of man is the Sower. In this vs. He is both the Commissioner of the angels and the Judge. The angels merely carry out His will. They are not judges. Note a form of συλλέγω again. Cf. 28 and 30. What the workers were forbidden to do, the angels are sent to do, only at the consummation of the age. Fahling quotes Augustine: "They who today are tares may tomorrow be grain." Exactly. Hypocrites might yet repent. But if not yet at the consummation, then they will be lost. By the way, this pericope does in no way prohibit church discipline. See Matt. 18:17-19 and

I Cor. 5:3-5. Manifest and impenitent sinners must be excommunicated. But the church must not go beyond cases of church discipline. The ἐκ phrase in vs. 41 denotes separation. Note that it is called His Kingdom, His Kingdom of grace. What will the angels, at Jesus' command, gather? Two things. The first is τὰ σκάνδαλα. The second is τοὺς ποιούντας τὴν ἀνομίαν. The translations are interesting:

AV: All things that offend, and them which do iniquity.

LB: Every temptation and all who are evil.

RSV: All causes of sin and all evildoers.

TEV: All who cause people to sin, and all other evildoers.

NIV: Everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

JB: All things that provoke offenses and all who do evil.

NEB: Whatever makes men stumble, and all whose deeds are evil.

NASB: All stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness.

NKJV: All things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness.

AAT: Those who do wrong and all who lead others to do wrong.

The text implies that hypocrites are a definite danger to true believers. Read John 6:66-71. It was a critical moment for the disciples (a year before Jesus' crucifixion). Many left Jesus. That was a σκάνδαλον, a temptation to leave Him. But Peter, in the name of the others, made a beautiful confession. He said "We have believed and we have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." But, in response, Jesus says that though He chose the twelve as disciples, one was a devil, a deceiver. Even then already he was about to betray Jesus. Jesus was then already preparing His disciples so that they would not fall prey to the σκάνδαλον. True to His own Word (our pericope) the Son of man did not uproot Judas then and there. On Judgment Day Judas will be shown as a σκάνδαλον and a worker of iniquity.

14. Vs. 42: τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός (cf. Dan. 3:6) in this case is figurative for excruciating pain. πυρός is adjectival "fiery furnace". The second part of this verse describes the reaction of those mentioned at the end of vs. 31. ἐκεῖ, of course, means in hell.
15. Vs. 43: τότε, after favorable judgment. οἱ δίκαιοι is forensic, "those declared righteous". Note the intensive particle ἐκ in the verb. Here compare Dan. 12:3. Cf. the participle ἐξαστράπτων of Jesus at His transfiguration, Lk. 9:29. And note ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα at I Jn. 3:2. "As the sun" is a simile. The sun is the brightest light we know. We can't even look directly at it without harm to ourselves. In this life nothing is brighter than the sun. This time βασιλεία means the kingdom of glory. The Father is the author of this kingdom. The antecedent of αὐτῶν is, of course, οἱ δίκαιοι, and is a genitive of relation.
16. "He who has ears, let him be hearing." What? Both Law and Gospel. The hearer is to ask himself: "Am I a hypocrite? There are hypocrites among the believers. Am I one of them?" Secondly, the penitent sinner may often be frustrated by the impurities in the visible Christian Church. But he must remember that he too is a sinner and that, except for the excommunication of manifest and impenitent sinners, fellow-members are to be treated in an evangelical manner. Thirdly, the Son of man is He who has sown His own and He alone will gather them in. Fourthly, the church should never resort to the use of the sword as does Islam in eradicating heretics. Fifthly, several quotes from Luther, noted by Stoeckhardt: "When so much wickedness and offense is noticed in the church, then many Christians, especially Christian pastors full of zeal would like to remove all the tares, and all the children of wickedness, desiring a church of pure saints. Some are inclined like Peter to strike with the sword, but the Lord prevents it. . . . If we proceed to establish a congregation in which there is no sin, we will condemn weak Christians, and even the strong because they stumble at times, and must

also exclude them from the church." Stoeckhardt adds this thought: "Through the angels, and not by us men, they will be separated. But he who would insist on doing this himself, would make the evil worse, would with the tearing out of the tares also tread under foot or root out the good wheat with the weeds." To be a pastor or member of a Christian congregation takes a good deal of heaven-sent wisdom. Just one other thought: If ever you are told by an unchurched person that he does not wish to belong to the church because there are hypocrites in the church, grant him that because Christ said it long ago. But that is no reason for not belonging to the church, for the Son of man who sows the good seed will also take care of the deceptive weeds on the last day.

17. It is a grim fact, stressed throughout Scripture, that the devil and his agents do their most nefarious work in the visible Christian Church, not outside it. Where God builds the Church, the devil builds a chapel. Christians need repent daily. They know and believe that Satan has been conquered. They have the shield of faith for protection. They must resist the devil who must then flee.