

Politics and Weeds

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43, 47–50
(black Bibles page 818; Children’s Bibles page 1179)

Wheat and tares (weeds) look alike, but the tares are enemies. *How are the enemies of the Kingdom of Heaven to be treated, Jesus?*

A moment from The Inquisition...

From our passage, three crucial sentences:

1. “The field is the world” – and *not* the church (verse 38)

2. “Let both grow together” (verse 30)
 - In other words, “My disciples, do not try to exterminate hypocrites, false teachers, or whomever you think the most dangerous sinners may be.”

 - These words have huge political implications, namely Freedom of speech and religion (1st amendment to US constitution)

3. “The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels” (verse 39)
 - In other words, “Final justice is coming, but it is at the end of the age, and it is for the angels to execute, not you.”

 - Compare the parable of the net in 13:47-50

- Does the kingdom of heaven have a police force, a military? It’s not the church, but does it have one? Yes, *the angels*. (See also Matt 26:53). But they come *at the end*, not now.

Some details for those interested:

- *What about the Old Testament?* The law did not give freedom of religion (Deut 13). Jesus’ teaching is for a new age: the Kingdom is *not* associated with one nation and government, and furthermore, it is founded upon the military and political weakness of the cross (John 18:33-37; Col 2:15).

- *What about abortion, human trafficking, etc.?* The government should not do the church’s bidding to defend the gospel or punish the church’s enemies, but the government should punish criminal wrongdoing and protect innocent life (Rom 13:1-7; Gen 9:6). At the very least, we should call upon our government to protect all from violence, even through coercive force if need be (“the sword”).

Who are the wheat? Who are the “good” fish? (13:48)

- To the rich young ruler, Jesus will say there is *no one* good/righteous, except God alone (Matt 19:17; Mark 10:18). “Then who can be saved?” the exasperated disciples ask. Looking at them, Jesus said, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matt 19:26)

- Later, Paul explains this “impossible” thing. For the believer’s righteousness comes *through Christ*: “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

- Jesus came to do the impossible, make bad fish *good*, and make tares into wheat!