

An Enemy Has Done This!

By Jim Elliff



When Jesus told his parable about the weeds growing alongside the wheat, he exclaimed, “An enemy has done this!”

It was so. Good seed had been sown, but the workers found weeds growing among the grain which at the time were nearly indistinguishable to the laborers. Nearly, I say. They did report that the weeds were there. At some stage the weeds began to look like weeds. The Master told them not to gather them at that moment, but to wait until the harvest

to sort them out. Then burn them, “but bring the wheat into my barn.” Jesus is saying this to angels. These angels are the ones who will bring in the harvest of souls at the end of time. (See Mt 13:24-30)

He explains further (in vv. 36-43) that “the field is the world.” “The good seed is the sons of the kingdom,” he said. “The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels . . . They will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

What should we think about this?

The Lord and Satan Sow Seed in the World

Jesus is inviting his listeners to think of the world as a huge farmer’s field. From this world there will be a harvest of people who belong to Christ and those who do not. In another place, Jesus said that the great division of mankind will include not only those who are alive but all who have died:

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)

The truth is, all who ever lived on this earth are either within the kingdom of God and under the loving rule of Christ or in a place of judgment forever, also under the just hand of Christ’s punishment. The world is a divided place, and this is the most profound of the divisions.

It is wise to think about this now. You are included.

Jesus also made this division clear to some religious leaders who did not believe in him or love him. In a “family” way to speak of the difference between people, Jesus described them as children of their father, the devil.

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

John says in 1 John 5:19 that “we know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” Note again, the great division.

The Local Churches are in the World

The local churches, the earthly outposts of Christ’s heavenly people, are subject to the enemy’s invasive sowing as well. Likely churches are the most strategic of places for the enemy to sow his own seed. Though the great harvest is for the entire world, and Jesus specifically told his harvest workers, the angels, not to separate the wheat from the weeds until that time, churches are told to remain pure.

I wrote to you . . . not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-12)

As far as the world as a whole is concerned, the church and the world grow together until the great harvest. But as far as the church is concerned, we must remain pure and distinctive as believers who are in, but not of, the world.

A Joyful Conclusion for the Believer

Jesus ends his explanation of the story with these exciting words: “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father!” Contrary to those who will be judged, we who are the good seed have a lot to look forward to!

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