

"The Harvest at the End of the Age"

Sane and Sensible Perspectives on the Last Days

This parable is meant to be a soul-stirring encouragement to believers who want to see a lot of souls saved. And it is. But it also brings a sobering message of doom to two groups whose primary focus is not the salvation of the lost. First, doom is declared for all the lost who do not repent. They will be uprooted from the earth like weeds. The second doom comes through the destruction of any hope that the pre-trib theory is true. In effect, Jesus is saying here that if you want to be taken away first, then you would have to qualify as a weed. But, then, that would be to your doom...



36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43 ESV

Wanting What God Wants

Is anyone thinking about this? With all the debate about pre-trib, mid-trib or post-trib most of the attention seems to be about saving oneself. People say things like, "Well, I sure don't want to go through the Tribulation. I don't want to stick around for that." Of course, we don't. None of us want to—at least by fallen nature. Fallen nature is always thinking about personal survival and comfort. That's what it does. But Jesus has given us a new nature, hasn't He? By the new birth, we now have a nature like His that wants to do God's will. Even if we don't want to be faithful, we can pray like He did when He was being asked to go through something He wanted to avoid.

And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Mark 14:36 ESV

We can all loudly thank God that Jesus—as the representative Man—was willing to lay His life down in sacrifice for us. Our salvation depended upon it! If He had turned aside from His path of duty, we would all be lost. If He had only been thinking about His own survival and comfort, we



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could never have been saved. Mercifully, He didn't back down in the face of suffering and death. As the first and only upright man since Adam fell, He was thinking about us. He came to earth for the sake of the harvest. When the Father showed Him there was no other way to harvest lost souls, He yielded fully and freely to the assignment. What about us?

Jesus wants us thinking (with Him) about the harvest of souls—at “the end of that age.” That's what is so incredible about this parable when you stop to think about it. When Jesus told us this the harvest had not even begun! Salvation through faith in Him could only truly begin once He died and resurrected. Wouldn't it have made more sense for Him to talk about, let's say, the harvest “of the age”, rather than one limited to the end of the age? After all, for two thousand years the church has been harvesting souls from the world during this age of grace. Why not tell us more about that? Why turn our attention to the end of the age, before that age even begins?

What Is He Thinking?

One can only guess at what Jesus may have been thinking, but perhaps there are two reasons. The first are the obvious ones. He would want the Church to know that until the end of the age, there will be “weeds”—the seed of the evil one—to contend with in every generation (see the first part of the parable quoted below). The Church will work under a condition where all that the evil one plants upon the earth will be allowed to grow up alongside the work that God will be doing to grow His wheat. There will be no final elimination of lies, or of evil, or of evil doers until the end of the age. Only then—at the very end—will the ingathering take place. Will the Church be harvested first? Will a pre-end Rapture take us all away? No, emphatically not!

Jesus says that the Lord of the Harvest will say to His servants (the angels), “Gather the weeds first.” You don't want to be in that group! They will be gathered, bundled together and burned. Until that moment the wheat—faithful believers—will still be alive and growing on the earth, right along with the seed of the evil one. The Church gets harvested last, not first. Jesus wants us to know this. Why? Wouldn't He be counting on His Church to be praying and witnessing right up to the last minute? Wouldn't He want us working with the Father to save those who can be saved?¹ Apparently, Jesus will be harvesting right up to the end of the age. In fact, this is not just any harvest, it is “the” harvest. And it comes at the very “end of the age.”

As much as we need to know this timeline for our own understanding, there may be a second reason for Jesus to tell this parable about the final harvest: our motivation. By His words in Matthew 24, Jesus reveals that the end will come “after the tribulation of those days” (see “A Great Tribulation”). In other words, Jesus was well aware that the Church would be facing its severest trial just before the end of the age. How could it be otherwise? All the evil seed sown on the earth by the evil one will be growing towards fullness and harvest. As the Church grows toward its harvest, evil will, therefore, be increasing all around it. This parable alone tells us that.

What We Don't See

We often fail to see that this dark harvest will (incredibly) help the Church be prepared for its own harvest. In that sense, it may be that it will be taken out of the way once it is no longer necessary. How? Let's remember that Jesus isn't coming back for “foolish virgins” but for a

Bride without “spot or wrinkle” who has finally reached Her destined maturity and worthily reflects the Image of the One who saved her.² The pressure of hard times and trials, combined with faith in God’s Word, are what cleanse us from contamination by the world even now. The Tribulation that is coming is certain to have a cleansing effect upon the Bride—at least those of the Church who remain faithful. This will inevitably mean being united to Jesus in His prayer of Gethsemane saying, “Not our will, but Thine be done.” The picture we are shown of the enemy’s final defeat is of believers standing firm, even “unto death.”

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Revelation 12:11 ESV

Will we love the harvest as much as Jesus wants us to? Certainly, many of us love harvesting souls now. But when the Tribulation begins, will we still love the harvest? Will we love the lost enough to pray, fast and witness for their salvation, even if they are the ones persecuting us? As the “love of many grows cold,” will our love for the lost become a blazing furnace?³ Let’s pray that it does.

Dear Christian, this is exactly what believers under persecution for two thousand years have been doing: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”⁴ How could we imagine that this was not destined for us? We have been chosen to be laborers in the greatest harvest the world has ever seen. That means we have also been destined to be purified by a love for the lost that will make us willing to lay our lives down (if we are praying to remain faithful). When all have been harvested who can be, when the Bride has been purified by selfless living, the seed of the evil one will finally be taken away. With our work completed, we then can look to be gathered. Then, we will see the Lord of the Harvest with unashamed eyes: “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

Scripture

24 He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’” Matthew 13:24-30 ESV

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



Scriptures and Footnotes

¹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 ESV

² So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:27 ESV

³ And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. Matthew 24:12-13 ESV

⁴ "Tertullian, one of the 2nd century Church Fathers wrote that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church", implying that the martyrs' willing sacrifice of their lives leads to the conversion of others."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_martyrs



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