

The Tares

Matthew 13: 24-30; 36-43

Donatist - Many "surface" believers to avoid death as the hands of Roman emperors denied Christ but later after 312AD and Constantine made Christianity the state religion professed the faith. The Donatist objected on the grounds they were not true believers.

Darnel - Darnel, ryegrass, usually grows in the same production zones as wheat and was a serious weed of cultivation, a mimic of wheat, until modern sorting machinery enabled darnel seeds to be separated efficiently from wheat. The process has operated since Neolithic times, creating secondary crops such as rye and oats through mimicry of cereals such as wheat. It is called *zizanium* in Greek after the Aramaic word, zunin. In Greek literature it is referred to as *lolium temulentum*. The ancient Greek botanist Theophrastus stated that wheat can transform into darnel since fields sown to wheat are often darnel when reaped

Trench: "We are not without this form of malice near Home. In Ireland I have known an outgoing tenant, in spite at his eviction, to sow wild oats in the fields which he was leaving. These, like the tares of the parable, ripening and seeding themselves before the crops in which they were mingled, it became next to impossible to extirpate."

The Text in New English Translation

24. He presented them with another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a person who sowed good seed in his field.
- **Vs 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 darnel in the field."
 - **Vs. 37** He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.
 - **Vs. 37** This is a battle not between God and Satan but [Genesis 3:15] "enmity between [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed [Jesus]"
 - **Vs. 38a** The field is the world and the good seed are the people [children] of the kingdom.
25. But while everyone was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed **darnel** among the wheat and went away.
- Or "sowed poisonous weeds"; KJV "tares." (*Lolium temulentum*), an especially undesirable weed that bears an uncanny resemblance to wheat until the ears of grain appear. So close is the resemblance to genuine wheat that darnel is sometimes called "false wheat." Darnel is considered poisonous; ingesting the weed causes feelings of drunkenness and can prove fatal. Under Roman law the sowing of such poisonous plants in someone else's field was specifically prohibited. A number of recent English translations use "weeds," but this does not convey the poisonous nature of darnel or the similarity in appearance to wheat.
 - **Vs. 38b** The poisonous weeds [zizanium] are the people [children] of the evil one.
 - **Vs. 39** and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.
26. When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the darnel also appeared.
- Many noted the remarkable similarities which exists between wheat and tares as long as they are yet in the blade. But only distinguishable when the air is formed, they fulfill literally the Lord's words, "by their fruits you shall know them." It is said that even farmers in Palestine who generally weed their fields do not attempt to separate the wheat and tares.

27. So the slaves [servants] of the landowner [in charge of managing the household affairs] came and said to him, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the darnel come from?'
- His servants are disciples not angels asking what today we might wonder, "How is it that the Church, born of the Spirit, could be so much like the world!"
28. He said, 'An enemy has done this!' So the slaves replied, 'Do you want us to go and gather it?'
- What appears to some as a hypocritical church is instead religious persons sown among true believers in every church. And until the fruit appears we cannot tell who is who. Only God knows the heart but we might be quick to excommunicate a thief hanging beside the Savior while electing a Sadducee as church administrator. Trench offers Fuller's reasons for letting them grow together until the harvest:
 - Hypocrites can never be severed but by Him that can search the heart.
 - If men should make the separation weak Christians would be counted no Christians and those who have a grain of grace under a land of imperfections would be counted reprobates.
 - Gods vessels of honor for all eternity that is yet appearing at wallowing in sin would be made castaways.
 - God by the mixture of the wicked with the godly will try the watchfulness and patience of his servants.
 - He will be stole many favors on the wicked to clear his justice and render them more inexcusable.
 - The mixture of the wicked grieving the godly will make them the more hardly pray for the day of judgment.
 - Let me add: We cannot legislate righteousness.
 - Matthew 21:31 "Then Jesus explained his meaning: "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do."
 - "It is only the Lord himself, the searcher of hearts, who with absolute certainty 'knows them that are his.'"
 - Thomas Aquinas maintained that only when the danger exists of harming the wheat must we not take such extreme measures to rid the church of this false element.
 - But even in His message to the churches, God never recommends drastic means but patient waiting for Him: Revelation 2:24 NET "But to the rest of you in Thyatira, all who do not hold to this teaching (who have not learned the so-called "deep secrets of Satan"), to you I say: I do not put any additional burden on you."
29. But he said, 'No, since in gathering the darnel you may uproot the wheat along with it.'
- Every young Christian in the time of his first zeal is tempted to be somewhat of a Donatist in spirit.
30. Let *both* grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burned, but then gather the wheat into my barn."
- "Evil is not, as so many dream, gradually to wain and disappear before the good. The world is to be found in the church. Each unfolds itself more fully out of its own root, after its own kind: [ultimately] each in its highest manifestation, in the person of Christ and of Antichrist."
 - **Vs. 40** As the poisonous weeds [zizanium] are collected and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

- **Vs. 41** The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes sin [scandalizes or entraps others] as well as all lawbreakers. [practices lawlessness]
- **Vs. 42** They will throw them into the fiery furnace [Daniel 3:6], where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - "These words point to some doom so intolerable that the Son of God came down from heaven and tasted all the bitterness of death that he might deliver us from ever knowing the secrets of anguish which, unless God be mocking men with empty threats, are shut up in these terrible words, 'There shall be wailing in gnashing of teeth'"[Matthew 22:13]
 - utterances of rage (Acts 7:54) under the sense of intolerable pain and unutterable loss.
- **Vs. 43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father [Daniel 12:3]. The one who has ears *had better listen!*
 - Glory shall be revealed in the Saints not just about them and it's full brightness.
 - Romans 8:18 NKJV "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - The saints the light shines through.
 - Daniel 12:3 "Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever."
 - Isaiah 52:1 "Wake up, wake up, O Zion! Clothe yourself with strength. Put on your beautiful clothes, O holy city of Jerusalem, for unclean and godless people will enter your gates no longer."
- The translation "had better listen!" captures the force of the third person imperative more effectively than the traditional "let him hear," which sounds more like a permissive than an imperative to the modern English reader. This was Jesus' common expression to listen and heed carefully (cf. Matt 11:15; 13:9; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8; 14:35).