

Parable of the Wheat and Tares

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Some people try to use the parable of the wheat and the tares to prove that the Rapture can't happen before the Second Coming (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). Jesus said to allow the wheat and tares to grow together until the harvest (v.30). Here is the pre-tribulation view of this parable.

1. Jesus is teaching about the "end of the age" which is the Second Coming.

2. The slaves asked if they should gather up the tares (not the wheat) before the harvest.

Jesus said the tares are "the sons of the evil one" (Matt. 13:38). Jesus didn't want the lost people to be judged and removed before the end of the age because He wants to give them time to repent and be saved. The wicked will not be judged and removed from the earth before the Second Coming.

3. Although Jesus specifically forbids the removal of the wicked, He did not forbid the removal of the righteous. Only those who are "in Christ" will be resurrected and taken to heaven at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-17), which will occur sometime prior to the end of the age. After the Rapture occurs, many who have been left behind on earth will be saved.

When Jesus said to allow the wheat and tares to grow together until the harvest, He didn't mean that the saved and lost (wheat and tares) would never die before the Second Coming. That cannot be the interpretation because many saved and lost people are separated by death every day. He was teaching that there will be a continual sowing of good seed (parable of the sower, Matt. 13:1-8) and a counter-sowing by Satan (parable of the tares, Matt. 13:38-39) until the end of this age. At the Second Coming, both the righteous and wicked will be gathered and separated (v.39-43).

4. The good seed are called the "sons of the kingdom" (v.38), those who will go alive in their natural bodies into the millennial kingdom.

5. At the Second Coming the tares are gathered first (Matt. 13:30). This can't be the Rapture, where the Christians are taken first in their resurrected bodies and the lost are left behind. The Rapture is not the harvest. The Second Coming is the harvest.

6. The wheat (saved) are gathered, not resurrected. Notice that both the wheat and the tares are gathered by the angels and the resurrection has not taken place. People in resurrected bodies don't need to be gathered by angels. The tares will not receive resurrection bodies until the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:11-15). This means that this "gathering" is not the Rapture because they are all in their natural bodies.

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