

The Wheat and the Weeds - 23 July 2023

Matthew 13. 24-30 and 36-43

Bear in mind that, apart from ploughing, all cereal husbandry in Jesus' time, sowing, weeding or harvesting, was obliged to be done entirely by hand.

In the first section of this week's passage, Matthew 13. 24-30, Jesus delivers a parable. In the second part, he gives its resolution.

What do you make of the observation of Mrs Elsie Catchpole, "In a Christian community, we have to put up with each other's funny ways"?

What further does this passage say about Church discipline?

Note the "harvesting" motif (vv. 29,30, 39) alongside its earlier occurrence in 9.38 (18th June).

Do you understand the "harvest" perspective as relating to a near, middle or distant future?



Vincent van Gogh – Cornfield with Crows

Some Background

With verse 42b compare Matthew 8.12b and 13.50. These words are alleged to be a favourite saying of Johanan ben Zakkai.

After the Fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish Temple by Roman armies in A.D. 69-71, the Jews had to flee their country and, wherever they fled, reconstitute Jewish life under a new regime.

Johanan ben Zakkai was the chief architect of this new regime.

There are two types of salvation envisaged in the world's religions, salvation by "works" and salvation by faith. This parable seems on the face of it to teach salvation by "works." St. Paul, however, (Galatians 2.16) and St. John affirm salvation by faith.

For St. John, note the reference to faith, or "believing" near the end of his chapters 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,12.

It is generally understood in most Christian denominations that "good works" do not win salvation, but are practised by every believer as a life-expression of gratitude for salvation already given to faith.