

# The Wheat and the Tares

Lesson \* 7 (COL 70-75; Mt. 13:24-30, 37-43)

## The Cosmic Setting of the Parable

1. According to John 1:1-3 the Word of God \_\_\_\_\_ all things and the Word of God was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When Jesus created the world he saw that everything which He had made was very \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 1:31)
3. When this world was created, Satan had already been cast out from heaven. Satan was jealous of \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven and was determined to get revenge. (See, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 35).
4. While Adam and Eve \_\_\_\_\_ (let the guard down) Satan came and introduced evil into Christ's good world.
5. The first example of wheat and tares growing together was in the story of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Both claimed to worship God, both brought an offering, both raised up an altar but \_\_\_\_\_ was like the wheat and \_\_\_\_\_ was like the tares. The evil eventually became so clearly distinguished from the good that God uprooted evil by sending a worldwide \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Symbols of the Parable

1. Even though Jesus did not explain who the householder represents, who do you suppose he symbolizes? \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 13:27)  
**Note:** The word "householder" is a translation of the Greek word *oikodespotes*. This word literally means, "the lord of the house."
2. Who is the **sower** of the parable? "He that soweth the good seed is the \_\_\_\_\_ of man." (Mt. 13:37)
3. What does the **field** represent? "the field is the \_\_\_\_\_." (Mt. 13:38)
4. More precisely, the field represents the \_\_\_\_\_. Ellen White perceptibly explains: 'The field,' Christ said, 'is the world.' But we must understand this as signifying the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ in the world. . The parable is a description of that which pertains to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, His work of salvation of men; and this work is accomplished through the church." (COL 70)

5. What does the **good seed** symbolize? “the good seed are the children of the \_\_\_\_\_” (Mt. 13:38)

6. What do the **tares** represent? “the tares are the children of the \_\_\_\_\_ one” (Mt. 13:38)

**Note:** The Greek word for tares here is *zizania*. The reference here is probably to the *lolium temulentum*. “This common Palestinian plant grows about 2 ft. tall. In its earlier stages it is indistinguishable from wheat. Only when the plant matures and the seeds of the darnel turn black is it easy to tell the difference. These seeds are poisonous, and if eaten, produce violent nausea, diarrhea, convulsions, and sometimes death.” (The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 5, p. 407).

7. The tares more specifically represent false believers in the church: “By bringing into the \_\_\_\_\_ those who bear Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ while they deny his \_\_\_\_\_, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled.” (COL 71)

8. Who is the **enemy** who sowed the tares? “the enemy that sowed them [the tares] is the \_\_\_\_\_.” (Mt. 13:39)

**Note:** The enemy’s sowing of tares was an act of revenge: “In the East, men sometimes took revenge upon an enemy by strewing his newly sown fields with the seeds of some noxious weed that, while growing, closely resembled wheat. Springing up with the wheat, it injured the crop and brought trouble and loss to the owner of the field. So it is from enmity to Christ that Satan scatters his evil seed among the good grains of the kingdom.” (COL 71).

9. When does the **harvest** occur? “the harvest is the end of the \_\_\_\_\_.” (Mt. 13:39)

**Note:** In Greek there are two main words which are translated in the King James Version as “world”. The first is *kosmos* which refers to the world in its material composition. The second is the word *aeon* which describes the world within its temporal framework. The word which is used in Mt. 13:39 is *aeon* and a better translation of it would be “the end of the age” (see also, Mt. 28:20 where the same word is used. Ellen White remarks:

“The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.” (COL 72).

10. Who are the **reapers** of the parable? “the reapers are the \_\_\_\_\_.” (Mt. 13:39)

11. **Thought question:** Although Jesus did not directly interpret who the servants represent, who do you suppose they symbolize? \_\_\_\_\_

12. **Thought question:** What do you suppose is represented by the sleeping of the servants?

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13. In terms of the book of Revelation, what do you think is represented by the act of binding up the tares in bundles to be burned? (**Hint:** Revelation 14:9-11)

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14. What is meant by the expression “wailing and gnashing of teeth”? (Mt. 13:43) To answer this question study the following passages: Psalm 112:10; Mt. 13:50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk. 13:28)

15. What parallel text refers to God’s people shining in the kingdom? “And they that be \_\_\_\_\_ shall \_\_\_\_\_ as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the \_\_\_\_\_ for ever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3)

**The Central Lessons of the Parable**

1. **Thought question:** Why must the wheat and the tares be allowed to grow together until the harvest?

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2. Does the parable of the wheat and the tares make church discipline unnecessary?

“Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in \_\_\_\_\_ sin must be separated from the \_\_\_\_\_, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and \_\_\_\_\_. . . . Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we \_\_\_\_\_ to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard a \_\_\_\_\_ subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself.” (COL 71)

3. There were two dangers in trying to uproot the tares before the right time: “There was danger of disturbing the roots of the \_\_\_\_\_, and destroying the young blades, if the weeds were rudely pulled from among them; besides this, the tares so closely \_\_\_\_\_ the grain, while growing, that it was hard to distinguish the one from the other.” (Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, p. 247).

4. Regarding the first of these dangers, Ellen White remarks: “As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these \_\_\_\_\_ believers is not fully manifested. Were they [false believers] to be separated from the church, others might be caused to \_\_\_\_\_, who but for this would have remained \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 72).

5. How has the teaching of this parable been illustrated in the way which God has dealt with the heavenly angels? (COL 72) \_\_\_\_\_

6. How was the teaching of this parable illustrated in the way which Jesus dealt with Judas? (Read, The Desire of Ages, p. 563) What would have happened if Jesus had uprooted Judas from the very beginning of His ministry?  
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7. What other unworthy persons in the early church illustrate the lessons of this parable? Reflect seriously upon the experience of each of these persons. (COL 73)

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

8. In what way did the church of the Dark Ages try to uproot what it thought to be tares? “Notwithstanding Christ’s warning, men have sought to uproot the tares. To punish those who were \_\_\_\_\_ to be evildoers, the church has had recourse to the \_\_\_\_\_ power. Those who differed from the \_\_\_\_\_ doctrines have been imprisoned, put to torture and death, at the instigation of men who \_\_\_\_\_ to be acting under the sanction of Christ. But it is the spirit of \_\_\_\_\_, not the Spirit of Christ, that inspires such acts.” (COL 74)

9. When will the clear difference be seen between the wheat and the tares? “Sinners who make a pretension of \_\_\_\_\_ mingle for a time with the true followers of Christ, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christianity is calculated to \_\_\_\_\_ many; but in the harvest of the world there will be no likeness between the good and evil. Then those who have \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, but who have not joined \_\_\_\_\_, will be made manifest.” (COL 74).

10. What is of critical importance in determining each persons destiny? “\_\_\_\_\_ is as nothing in the scale. It is \_\_\_\_\_ that decides destiny.” (COL 74)

11. What can be said about those who wish to cleanse the church from sin and sinners before the close of probation?

“Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church \_\_\_\_\_, not the church \_\_\_\_\_. We are sorry that there are defective \_\_\_\_\_, that there are tares amid the wheat. . . . Although there are evils existing in the \_\_\_\_\_, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these \_\_\_\_\_ days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the \_\_\_\_\_ object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His \_\_\_\_\_ regard.” (Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 45, 49)

