

# Matthew 13:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

## Analysis

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**The field is the world** (ὁ δὲ ἀγρός ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος, ho de agros estin ho kosmos)—not merely the church, but the entire created order where believers and unbelievers coexist. **The good seed are the children of the kingdom** (υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας, huioi tēs basileias)—those who belong to God's reign through new birth. **The tares are the children of the wicked one** (υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ, huioi tou ponērou)—literally 'sons of the evil one,' identifying spiritual parentage (John 8:44).

The distinction between wheat and tares (likely darnel, *Lolium temulentum*, which looks identical to wheat until maturity) illustrates the impossibility of perfect human discernment in distinguishing true from false professors. This warns against premature judgmental purging of the church, while also soberly acknowledging that counterfeit 'believers' exist alongside genuine ones.

## Historical Context

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In first-century Palestinian agriculture, darnel was a common weed problem—its seeds were poisonous, and it was virtually indistinguishable from wheat in early growth stages. Separating them prematurely would uproot both. Roman law even prohibited sowing darnel in an enemy's field, showing this was a known form of agricultural sabotage.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding the 'field' as the world (not the church) affect your expectations for spiritual purity in Christian communities?
2. What are the dangers of premature 'tare removal'—both in church discipline and in personal judgment of others?
3. How can you cultivate discernment between wheat and tares without falling into judgmental pride or paranoid suspicion?

## Interlinear Text

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ὁ	δὲ	ἀγρός	ἐστίν	ὁ	κόσμος	τὸ	δὲ	καλὸν	σπέρμα
G3588	<b>but</b>	<b>The field</b>	<b>is</b>	G3588	<b>the world</b>	G3588	<b>but</b>	<b>the good</b>	<b>seed</b>
	G1161	G68	G2076		G2889		G1161	G2570	G4690
οὗτοί	εἰσιν	οἱ	υἱοὶ	τῆς	βασιλείας·	τὰ	δὲ	ζιζάνια	
<b>are</b>	<b>are</b>	G3588	<b>the children</b>	G3588	<b>of the kingdom</b>	G3588	<b>but</b>	<b>the tares</b>	
G3778	G1526		G5207		G932		G1161	G2215	
εἰσιν	οἱ	υἱοὶ	τοῦ	πονηροῦ					
<b>are</b>	G3588	<b>the children</b>	G3588	<b>of the wicked</b>					
G1526		G5207		G4190					

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 8:44** (Evil): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

**Acts 13:10** (Evil): And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

**Genesis 3:15** (Parallel theme): And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

**Matthew 13:19** (Kingdom): When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

**James 1:18** (Parallel theme): Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

**1 Peter 1:23** (Parallel theme): Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.