

# The Parable of the Dragnet

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Matthew 13:47-50

The parables in Matthew 13 concerning the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven deal with that period of time between Israel's rejection of Christ, their King and His second coming as King of Kings. It is a time period that has *"been keep secret from the foundation of the world"* (Mt. 13:35). That is why the parables are called "mysteries."

1. Two parables concern the "growth and development" of the kingdom.
  - The parable of the mustard seed (vs. 31-32). Depicts abnormal expansion of the Kingdom
  - The parable of leaven (v. 33). Depicts increasing corruption within the Kingdom.
2. Two parables concern value and cost of the kingdom.
  - The parable of the hidden treasure (v. 44).
  - The parable of the pearl of great price (vs. 45-46).
3. Two parables depict the coexistence of good and bad in the kingdom and the final separation of good and bad in judgment.
  - The parable of the wheat and the tares (vs. 24-30). This parable dealt with "farming."
  - The parable of the dragnet (vs. 47-50). This parable dealt with "fishing." At least four of Jesus' disciples were professional fishermen. They understood exactly what this parable was teaching.

In the late '50's there was a police drama on TV called Dragnet. It starred Jack Webb as Sergeant Joe Friday and his partner, Bill Gannon, played by Harry Morgan. Dragnet had an ominous music theme— Dum-de-dum-dum. Dum-de-dum-dum-dum. The show always opened with this introduction: "Ladies and gentlemen, the story you're about to hear is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent."

Today, we're going to study a parable about "God's Dragnet." Ladies and gentlemen, the story you're about to hear is true. The names have not been changed. We're going to examine the facts as they were spoken by Jesus. Here's His story. [Read text— Matthew 13:47-53]

## I. The FISHING with the net.

### A. The PROCESS:

1. The Net— A “dragnet” was a large fishing net with wooden floats on the top edge and weights on the bottom edge for “dragging” a lake bottom. The net would enclose whatever happened be within it’s path.
2. The net would drawn to shore by a crew positioned on the beach. In the case of a large catch, the net was hauled to shore by a boat (John 21:6-8).
  - Today, fishermen on the Sea of Galilee operate the same way they did in Jesus’ day. The only difference is the boats now have engines.

### B. The PICTURES.

1. The **Sea**— The sea pictures nations of people, specifically Gentiles (Rev. 17:15), or the sphere in which people live—i.e. the world.
  - a) The sea corresponds with the "field/world" in the other parables.
  - b) Into the sea of humanity God’s net is cast to gather out a people for His Name..
2. The **Net**—The purpose of the net is to gather fish.
  - a) It pictures God’s call or invitation to be saved.
  - b) "*And gathered of every kind*" (v. 47). The sea contains good and bad of “*every kind.*” The net is indiscriminate in what it catches. It goes out to all men. The net itself makes no distinction of the fish.
    - God’s call to be saved is universal (Mt. 11:28).
    - His invitation for salvation does not discriminate (Rom. 2:11)
    - It is to every creature (Mk. 16:15).
    - Whosoever will may come (Rev. 22:17).
    - God is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2 Pet. 3:8).

## II. The FULLNESS of the net (v. 48).

A. **The completion** of the fishing—The fishing is not complete until the net is full—The net is not pulled in until it is full.

1. Filling the net refers to the fulfilling of God's schedule. The Scripture often speaks of the filling of the allotted time according to God's time-table.
  - Genesis 15:16— *"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."*
  - Galatians 4:4 refers to the birth of Christ—*"When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."*
  - Romans 11:25 speaks of the time when the *"fullness of the Gentiles be come in"* (Rom. 11:25).
  - Ephesians 1:10 speaks of the *"dispensation of the fullness of times."*
2. Jesus interprets the filled net as *"the end of the world"* (v. 49).

B. **The drawing** to shore (v. 48).

- Where is the shore? At the end of the sea. Since the sea represents the world, and the shore is at the end of the sea, the shore represents *"the end of the world"* (v. 49).

## III. The FINDING within the net

- The net contained both good and bad fish— "Keepers" and Junk fish (Lev. 11:9-12).

A. The DISCERNING (v. 48— *"...and sat down..."*).

1. The sitting down on the shore indicates the sorting of the fish required time and deliberation. God's judgment is never rash or hasty. God always considers all the facts and details before passing judgment.
2. Romans 2:2 says, *"We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth."* No sinner will be condemned by God without due consideration of all the facts (Rev. 20:11-15).

- B. The DIVIDING (v. 49). This dividing is similar to the dividing of the tares from the wheat and the sheep from the goats (Mt. 25:31-46).
- C. The DISCARDING (v. 49 cf. Mt. 24:37-42).
- D. The DESTINY (V. 50).
1. The **company** in judgment—The wicked are separated from the righteous. They will be put in a place where no one is righteous. Since they cared not to be in the company of God’s people while they lived, they will put in a place where there are no people of God.
  2. The **conditions** of judgment— “...*furnace of fire*...” No picnic ground... No joy... No peace... No rest... No hope of escape.
  3. The **crying** in judgment (v. 50).
    - a) "Wailing" means loud lamentation / crying. There will be no laughter in hell. Nobody will be telling funny jokes.
    - b) "Gnashing" means to bite or grate the teeth. It reflects the terrible agonizing pain the lost will experience in hell.
    - c) "Wailing" indicates the inner pain of the mind. "Gnashing" speaks of the outward bodily pain.

**SUMMATION:** This parable shows not all in the Kingdom of Heaven will be saved. God wants everyone to be saved, but He doesn’t force salvation on anyone. His invitation goes out to all, but each person must accept it. ***“Many are called, but few are chosen”*** (Mt. 22:14).

Randy Alcorn, in his book *Heaven*, relates a true story of what happened to a professional singer named Ruthanna Metzgar. She was invited to sing at the wedding of a very wealthy man. The reception was to be held at an exclusive restaurant on the top floor of Seattle’s Columbia Center. After the wedding, she arrived at the reception with her husband.

As they approached the entrance the maitre d’ said, “May I have your names please?” She told him her name and her husband’s name. The maitre d’ looked and said, “I’m sorry, but your name isn’t here.” She said, “Please check again. I sang at the wedding and then she spelled her

name.” The maitre d’ looked again and said, “It doesn’t matter who you say you are, and what you said you did, your name is not on the list. Without your name in my book, you can’t enter.”

Then he called over a waiter and said, “Show these people down using the service elevator.” She and her husband were escorted to the service elevator and the waiter pushed the “G” button for garage. They arrived at the parking garage next to a garbage bin. Her puzzled husband asked, “Ruthanna, what happened? We were at the door of the party and we end up at the garbage bin.”

Ruthanna answered, “I remember getting the invitation, but I was too busy to RSVP. I just assumed that because I was the singer that I’d get in.”

God has invited every person to His wedding feast in heaven. But too many people are too busy to respond to the invitation. It doesn’t matter who you think you are (pastor, deacon, S.S. teacher, church member) or what you think you have done (baptized) that will get you into heaven. The only people admitted to the party in heaven are those who have their names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

The net is cast. It has not been drawn yet. There is still an opportunity to be saved.

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