

Matthew 13:47-50

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-13/matthew-1347-50/>

Jesus tells another short parable about the kingdom of heaven. It is about a fishing net that catches all manner of fish. The good fish are kept. The bad fish are thrown away.

This parable is unparalleled in the other gospel accounts.

Jesus told His disciples a third parable. It *again* is about *the kingdom of heaven*. He said it was *like a dragnet* which had been *cast into the sea*. A *dragnet* was a large net *cast* behind a boat as it moved over the *sea*. As the boat moved, the net dragged behind it and caught whatever it scooped. A *dragnet* was a means how fisherman like Simon Peter, John, and James caught *fish*.

The *dragnet* in Jesus's parable caught *fish of every kind*. Once the net *was* full, the fisherman went to shore and *they drew it back up on the beach* to see what they had caught. Jesus said how *they sat down* and began to sort their catch. *They gathered the good fish into containers* for safe keeping until *the good fish* could be sold in market. *But the bad fish*, which had no value to them, *they threw away*.

This ended Jesus's parable. But He then summarizes its meaning. *So it will be at the end of the age*, He said. The phrase *the end of the age* refers to *the end of the kingdom of this earth*. The *kingdom of this world* will end, and *the kingdom of God* will fill the earth (Daniel 2:35,44). Then this earth will be replaced with a new earth, in a new heaven (Revelation 21:1). At the end of the age *the kingdom of heaven* will be fully established upon the earth. Also at the end of the age will come the judgement.

In His parable *the end of the age* begins *when the dragnet was filled*. Right now (both when Jesus said this parable up through our own day and continuing) is the present age when *the dragnet* is *gathering the fish of every kind*. This phrase *fish of every kind* may be an allusion to the fact that men and women of *every* tribe and tongue are seen standing before God's throne in heaven.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.”
(Revelation 7:9)

In Jesus's parable, the fishermen who sort *the good fish* from *the bad fish* and who *gather the good fish into containers* are *the angels who will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire*.

The angelic sorting of *the wicked from among the righteous* is an interesting phrase. It possibly depicts the same event Jesus described earlier in His explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, when *the angels gathered* the tares from the wheat and *threw them into the furnace of*

fire (Matthew 13:40-42). Normally in the Bible, the righteous are delivered out of a place that will be judged, as with Lot in the instance of Sodom, or Noah in the instance of the flood. But in this instance, as with the parable of the tares, *the wicked* are removed.

As with the parable of the wheat and tares, this seems to be due to the fact that this event at *the end of the age* is taking place as a part of Jesus establishing His *kingdom* on earth. As He establishes it, these *wicked* will be taken out of His *kingdom*. The removal of *the wicked* is part of the establishing.

However, unlike the parable of the wheat and tares, which appears to focus on Israelites by use of the term “sons of *the kingdom*” this parable appears to apply to everyone on earth. Perhaps this parable of *the dragnet* predicts what Paul sets forth as a reality for Gentiles, that any Gentile who believes in Jesus is grafted into Israel, as a wild olive branch is grafted in to a domestic olive tree (Romans 11:17).

Jesus describes this *furnace of fire* as *that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*.

The ultimate place of judgement for unbelievers will be the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15), where also death and Hades are thrown. But unbelievers will also have their deeds judged (Revelation 20:12). It appears there will be degrees of judgement, as Jesus indicated some judgements of *the wicked* would be more tolerable than others (Matthew 10:15). Every person who does not believe on Jesus will be judged, and are already judged because they have not believed on Jesus (John 3:18; Revelation 20:15).

Biblical Text

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.