

# PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET: SEPARATING THE BAD FROM THE GOOD MATHEW 13:47–50

## *Introduction*

The net is the Kingdom of Heaven and the gospel is the message of the kingdom. The sea is the world in all the depth of its darkness and its unknown. The fishermen represent Christ and His followers. Note several things.

1. They worked and worked hard. They cast the gospel, the message of the kingdom, into the world.
2. There is a mixture of good and bad in the Kingdom of Heaven while the kingdom is on earth. The net, the gospel and kingdom, gathers both good and bad; there is a mixture on earth. Some bad do join the good in the kingdom, which means that all who join the kingdom on earth are not sincere and genuinely good.
3. There is a set time, a climactic hour coming. The net has a limit as to how many it will hold. *Someday* heaven will be full. Of course, only the Lord knows when it is time to draw the net.
4. Separation of the bad from the good does not take place until the net is full. Judgment is not only to take place now. The Lord has the right and wisdom to execute judgment — to cast away the bad. (Mt. 5:13; 2 Pet. 3:3-4, 8-13.)

It should be noted that Christ does not explain the first part of the parable. The meaning is clear.

- I. The parable describes the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 47).
- II. A net is cast into the sea (vv. 47-48).
- III. A symbol of the end of the world (vv. 49-50).

### **I. *Mathew 13:47 Kingdom of Heaven***

The parable describes the Kingdom of Heaven (See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24).

### **II. *Mathew 13:47–48 Gospel, Kingdom of Heaven***

A net is cast into the sea (See *Dragnet, Seine Net*, Mt. 13:47). Christ and His true followers do cast the net of the gospel into the world. They work and work hard “fishing for men” (Mt. 4:19).

Note what happens when the net is cast into the sea.

1. The net gathers every kind. The visible kingdom or church contains a mixture of both good and bad. There are reasons why some bad (unconverted people) want to be a part of the earthly church.
-

- a. The church stresses *morality, virtue, ethics and justice*. Civilization and society progress when they are built upon this message, so the church is considered one of the basic institutions of some societies.
  - b. The church offers *social standing and opportunity*. In some communities, it is even expected that a socially acceptable person becomes a church member.
  - c. The church offers *fellowship*. Many people are lonely and empty for various reasons such as being single, divorced, a newcomer or shy. The church meets their need.
  - d. The church instills a sense of *spiritual security* to some. They feel God is pleased and accepts them because they attend and serve the church regularly. Therefore, they *support and work for* the church.
  - e. The church offers some degree of *authority and direction*. The Bible says that “men are as the fish of the sea...that have no ruler over them.” Some find in the church the authority they need. There are few self-disciplined people on earth, so most people need authority and direction.
2. The net is drawn when full. Note two encouraging facts.
    - a. Sometimes the net catches more than at other times. The catch sometimes goes quickly and sometimes slowly. God’s servant should never despair from lack of results, and he should never quit because of slow results (1 Cor. 3:6-8).
    - b. The gospel is effective: the net (heaven) will be filled. God’s Word will not return to Him empty (Isa. 55:11).
  3. The good are gathered into containers. Note the good are already in the Kingdom of Heaven while on this earth. They have a real relationship with God already.

**John 10:9** “*I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.*”

**John 10:14** “*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.*”

**John 10:16** “*I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.*”

**John 10:27-28** “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.*”

**John 14:20** “*On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.*”

**1 John 1:3** *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

**1 John 3:24** *Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

**Gal 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Rev 3:20** *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

**Isa 43:10** *“You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.*

4. The bad are cast away. Who are the bad? They are the sea creatures which are...
- the wrong kind
  - too small
  - unclean
  - useless
  - unfit
  - dead

### MATHEW 13:47 DRAGNET, SEINE NET

The dragnet was actually a large square net that was pulled through the water behind a boat. It was weighted down so that it formed a *cone-shaped drag* catching everything in its path. The fishermen could tell when the net was full by the weight of its pull. When it was full, they drew the net to shore and began the tedious process of separating the good fish from the bad. The bad, of course, were not kept. They were cast away. □

### III. *Mathew 13:49–50 Judgment*

The net is a symbol of the end of the world.

1. Angels shall come forth to execute judgment in behalf of Christ. The dragnet cannot distinguish between the good and bad as it is pulled through the water - it just gathers the bad with the good.
  - a. Separation occurs when the net is full and has been pulled to shore.
  - b. The angels of God shall do the separating, not the church or any religious authority (See Mt. 7:1 -50).

It is a fact; when man judges, he blunders and makes mistakes. There are at least three reasons why (See Mt. 13:30).

2. The purpose of the angels' coming forth is to separate the wicked from the righteous. Note a critical point: who it is that is cast away. It is people who are in the net, who are in the Kingdom of Heaven, but they are still bad. They have not become good. Brushing shoulders with and living among, fellowshiping and worshipping with the good will not make a bad person good. A bad person who is bad all through life will be bad at the end of life.

**Thought 1.** The only time the bad will be in the presence of the good is *now*. Soon, very soon, the bad will be *separated* from the good. Christ will separate the bad from the good. If a person lives bad all of his life, even if he is in the church (net) and among the good, he will not be allowed to continue with the good. He will be taken and cast out of the presence of the good. Christ preached and taught separation from God time and again.

**Mat 13:49** *“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.”*

**Mat 25:32** *“All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

**Luke 16:26** *“And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”*

**Luke 17:34** *“I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.”*

**Thought 2.** There is a specific destination for the wicked and it is a place of *eternal punishment*. Christ preached and taught *eternal punishment* time and again (See Hell Fire, Mt. 5:22).

**Mat 5:22** *“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”*

**Mat 5:27-30** *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”*

**Mat 10:28** *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

**Mat 13:30** *“Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”*

**Mat 18:8-9** *“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”*

**Mat 13:41-42** “The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**Mat 23:15** “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.”

**Mat 23:33** “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”

**Mat 25:41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

**Luke 12:5** “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

**Thought 3.** This parable is about hypocrites: people in the net who remain bad or wicked. ■

### MATHEW 05: 22 HELL FIRE OR GEHENNA (GEENNA)

*“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” Mathew 05:22*

The word is used eleven or twelve times in the New Testament, and in every case it is spoken by Jesus except in the Epistle of James. It illustrates the terrible truth of the second death, of man’s final separation from God. Jesus pointed to the burning, repulsive rubbish dump outside the city limits of Jerusalem and said that it was exactly what hell was like. The dump was called Gehenna. It was in the Valley of Hinnom which served as a public incinerator. Hanging over it was a layer of thick, smouldering smoke arising from what seemed to be an eternal flame. The smell and filth became a breeding cesspool for a loathsome worm that was difficult to kill (Mk. 9:44). Thus, Jesus found in Gehenna a description of just what it means to be separated from God eternally and to die the second death. Several facts are said about hell or Gehenna:

- It is the same as the lake of fire, a place of torture (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14-15).
- It has to do with the second death (Rev. 21:8; Jn. 8:24).
- It is Hell (Mt. 5:29-30; 10:28; 23:15, 33; Lk. 12:5).
- It is eternal fire (Mt. 18:8).

- It is the fire of Hell (Mt. 18:9; Jas. 3:6).
- It is unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43-49).

The teaching of Jesus should always be remembered. Remembrance is critical in determining a person's fate. Hell is a definite place, a real place that is specifically located. It was originally prepared for the devil and his angels. But all men who choose to follow self and evil and to reject God shall also be sent to hell eternally.

***Mat 3:10** "The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."*

***Mat 5:29-30** "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."*

***Mat 7:19** "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."*

***Mat 10:28** "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."*

***Mat 11:23** "And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day."*

***Mat 13:42, 50** "They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth... And throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

***Mat 16:18** "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*

***Mat 18:8-9** "If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."*

***Mat 23:15** "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites: You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."*

***Mat 23:33** "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"*

**Mat 25:41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

**Mark 9:43-48** “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

**Luke 3:9** “The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

**Luke 10:15** “And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.”

**Luke 12:5** “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

**Luke 16:23-24** “In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’” □