

## Parable of the Net (Dragnet)

Matthew 13:47-50

<sup>47</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

<sup>48</sup> which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

<sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,

<sup>50</sup> and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

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## Discussion Questions: The Parable of the Net (Dragnet)

The Parable of the Dragnet, also known as the Parable of the Net, can be found in Matthew 13:47-50. Jesus used parables to teach important lessons using everyday activities and real-life examples. In this parable, fishermen cast their nets into the sea and gather fish of all kinds. Once their nets are full, they return to shore and separate the good fish from the bad. The good fish are kept in containers, while the bad ones are thrown away.

Jesus then explains that this parable is about the kingdom of heaven. The "age" Jesus refers to begins with the establishment of the Church in Acts 2 at Pentecost and ends at the end of the age. During this time, disciples gather souls (represented by the metaphor of "fish") from all over the world. At the end of this age, angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous. This task is assigned to the angels and not the disciples, as they are better suited for this type of work. The wicked souls will be cast into the furnace of fire. What will happen to the righteous souls is not explained here, but if it is similar to the parable of the tares (weeds), they will "shine like the sun in the kingdom of heaven."

**Matthew 13:47** (read the verse outlined in black): "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

Jesus refers to the kingdom of heaven 31 times in the New Testament.

1. **What is a dragnet?** A dragnet is a type of fishing net that is wide, broad, and deep. The net is weighed down by rocks or lead balls, which pull it to the bottom of the water, capturing all the fish in its path. Several boats would pull such a net, capturing many fish. This can be interpreted as a metaphor for the gospel going out into the world. The sea represents the world, and there will be a gathering of people from all walks of life. However, not everyone will be drawn up into the net, meaning not everyone will follow Christ.
2. **Who or what does the net represent?** The net represents the Gospel. The disciples of the Gospel have been given the task of spreading the word of God to every corner of the world. In essence, the disciples, who are responsible for preaching the gospel, is the act of "casting the net." This holy mission is often compared to casting a net into the sea, hoping to gather up as many souls as possible. It is the duty of the disciples to preach the Gospel, to be the messengers of God's love and forgiveness. They must not concern themselves with who will be saved or not, but rather focus on spreading the message to as many people as possible. In their quest to gather the souls of every kind, the disciples must cast

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their net wide and far, leaving no stone unturned. They must be diligent in their efforts, never giving up on those who seem lost or unreachable.

3. **Who or what does the sea represent?** The sea, with its boundless expanse, serves as a metaphor for the world and all that it encompasses. It is a vast and mysterious entity, holding within its depths the collective history and destiny of humanity. From the earliest civilizations to the present day, the sea has borne witness to the ebb and flow of multitudes, nations, and languages, a timeless testament to the enduring power and majesty of the natural world. It is assumed that fishermen use their nets to catch fish, although it is never explicitly stated what they are trying to catch.
4. **Who represents the fish?** Fish represent everyone, believers and non-believers, of every religious faith, including Muslims, Mormons, Catholics, Christians, and Atheists. Fish also represent people of every age, sex, race, ethnicity, and class, without discrimination. A common question that comes up nowadays is whether animals, including pets, will go to heaven.

**Matthew 13:48** (read verses outlined in blue): **which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.**

5. **What does it mean “when it is full?”** This phrase refers to a metaphorical fishing net that symbolizes the spread of the Gospel to all corners of the Earth. When this net is full of fish, it means that God is satisfied, and His message has been delivered to all who need to hear it. This state of fulfillment occurs when Jesus' message has been preached to the ends of the Earth, and God is pleased with the efforts of His followers.
6. **What does it mean “they drew to shore?”** It means that the process of harvesting fish has come to an end. However, at this point, the fish haven't been sorted into good and bad yet. This situation is similar to the part of Matthew 13:49 that talks about "the end of the age." This marks the conclusion of the Gospel ministry, and the preaching of the Gospel will cease. For some, this may be a time of sadness or mourning, but it should be a time of celebration. The disciples and ministers who have been spreading the Gospel have now completed their work. It is time for them to rest from their labor, and for everyone else to enter into a time of joy in the Lord.
7. **How are the fish sorted?** When the fishermen bring in their catch, the net is emptied, and the sorting process begins. The fish are carefully separated into two categories: the good and the bad. The good fish are the ones that are healthy and

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large enough to eat or sell, and they are carefully placed into special containers. These containers are designed to keep the fish fresh until they can be processed, sold, or consumed. The bad fish, on the other hand, are unusable and are thrown away. These fish are often damaged or too small to be of any value. The fishermen carefully sort through all the different kinds of fish to make sure that only the good ones are kept. This process can be time-consuming, but it's essential to ensure that the quality of the catch is maintained. The fishermen take pride in their work and are diligent in their efforts to provide the best quality fish for their customers.

**The Parable of the Net Explained by Jesus: Matthew 13:49** (read verses outlined in red): **So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,**

Jesus explains the Parable of the Net, similarly to the Parable of the Tares. At the end of the age, the angels will come and separate wicked from the righteous.

There are two parts to this verse.

The end of the age.

The angels who will separate the wicked from the just.

- 8. What is the end of the age?** Regardless of one's belief in pre-tribulation or mid/post-tribulation, the end of the age will be a significant event of divine proportions. It will mark a great separation between the good and the bad and will bring an end to the Gospel ministry and the preaching of the Good News. The disciples and ministers who have dedicated their lives to spreading the Gospel will have completed their divine mission and will finally rest from their labor.
- 9. How will the wicked be separated from the just?** It is at this moment everyone has been given the opportunity to embrace Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is important to keep in mind that there is only one route to the Father, and that is through Jesus Christ. The angels will segregate the righteous from the wicked. There is no room for indecision or alternative paths that will be deemed acceptable. The wicked will be cast into the fiery furnace, where they will experience excruciating pain and agony. Just as in the parable of the weeds, those who have virtuous souls will "radiate like the sun in the kingdom of heaven." It is worth noting that no list is provided; instead, the angels will be called upon to determine who is righteous and who is evil. Those who decline to

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accept Jesus and forsake God will be judged and held accountable for their actions.

10. **How strong are these angels?** Read 2 Kings 19:35. 1 angel killed 185,000 Assyrians.

**Matthew 13:50** (read verses outlined in green): **and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."**

11. **What is the furnace of fire?** The Bible describes a separation that will happen between people. Christ uses the metaphor of a furnace of fire to illustrate the consequences of this division. Although Christ does not explain in detail what causes a person to be sorted into either the kingdom of heaven or hell, the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament provide a clear explanation of the criteria. According to the Bible, righteous people do not become righteous through their own actions or choices. Instead, they receive "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe." This means that those who believe in and have faith in Jesus Christ are considered righteous. On the other hand, those who reject this path to righteousness through faith in Jesus are considered evil and children of the Devil. These people will be thrown into the furnace of fire. In summary, the furnace of fire represents the eternal punishment that awaits those who reject the path of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. The sorting angels will place the righteous in the kingdom of heaven and the unrighteous in the furnace of fire.
12. **Why will there be wailing and gnashing of teeth?** The New Testament consistently warns that those who do not place their faith in Christ will suffer great distress in a place often described as a fiery furnace. The agony of this place is said to be so unbearable that it causes crying and gnashing of teeth, traditional expressions of great misery. This is how Jesus often describes what we commonly refer to as hell. On the other hand, those who follow Christ will experience a bright, eternal future filled with rejoicing. Unfortunately, for those who have chosen to do evil, their fate will be a time of mourning before they face eternal oblivion. They will be cast into the fire, where they will suffer the consequences of their actions.

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The Parable of the Dragnet, also known as the Parable of the Net, can be found in Matthew 13:47-50.

**Matthew 13:47** (read the verse outlined in black): "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

1. What is a dragnet? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Who or what does the net represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who or what does the sea represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who represents the fish? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Matthew 13:48** (read verses outlined in blue): which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

5. What does it mean "when it is full?" \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. What does it mean "they drew to shore?" \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. What is the end of the age? \_\_\_\_\_  
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10. How strong are these angels? \_\_\_\_\_  
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11. What is the furnace of fire? \_\_\_\_\_  
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12. Why will there be wailing and gnashing of teeth? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Parable of the Net (Dragnet) Quiz

1. Who or what is the parable of the net?
  - a. God
  - b. Jesus
  - c. The Gospel
  - d. The disciples
2. Who or what is the parable of the sea?
  - a. A large body of water
  - b. The world
  - c. It is larger than a lake and smaller than an ocean.
  - d. The sea of Galilee
3. Who represents the fish? Circle all that apply.
  - a. Believers
  - b. Non-believers
  - c. Animals
  - d. Muslims
  - e. Christians
  - f. Atheists
  - g. Mormons
  - h. Jews
4. What is the parable of the net being full?
  - a. The net is full of fish and no more can be caught.
  - b. All the souls in the net will go to heaven.
  - c. It is time to empty the net and go catch more fish.
  - d. God is satisfied His Gospel message has been delivered to all who need to hear it.
5. When the fishermen “drew to the shore,” what does this time signify?
  - a. It is the end of the age.
  - b. It is time to empty the net and go catch more fish.
  - c. There are no more fish in the sea.
  - d. The disciples and ministers are no longer allowed to preach the Gospel.



6. How are the fish sorted?
  - a. The good fish are eaten by the fishermen and the bad fish are used as bait for the next cast.
  - b. The good fish are put into containers and the bad fish are thrown away.
  - c. The dead fish are put into containers and the live fish are thrown back into the sea.
  - d. The big fish are sent to the restaurants, the medium fish are sent to the market, and the small fish are sent to the grocery store.
7. At the end of the age, who will separate the wicked from the righteous?
  - a. Jesus
  - b. God
  - c. The angels **Matthew 13:49**
  - d. The disciples
8. How strong are these angels who separate the wicked from the just?
  - a. In 2 Kings 19:35, the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians.
  - b. In Joshua 6:1-27, the angel of the Lord killed everyone except two in the city of Jericho.
  - c. In Exodus 12:29-30 the angel of the Lord killed  $\frac{1}{2}$  the population of the Egyptians allowing the Israelites to leave Egypt.
  - d. In Revelation 12:7-9, Michael, the Archangel, and his angels defeated and kicked out  $\frac{1}{2}$  the angels from heaven.
9. Where is the furnace of fire?
  - a. In the center of the Earth
  - b. Hell**
  - c. Sodom and Gomorrah
  - d. Daniel 3:8-30
10. What will it be like for those who are thrown in the furnace of fire?
  - a. 3<sup>rd</sup> degree sunburn
  - b. Excruciating pain
  - c. Wailing and gnashing of teeth
  - d. They will survive if God is with them

## Parable of the Net (Dragnet) Quiz

1. Who or what is the parable of the net?
  - a. God
  - b. Jesus
  - c. The Gospel **Study Guide Q. #2**
  - d. The disciples
2. Who or what is the parable of the sea?
  - a. A large body of water
  - b. The world **Study Guide Q. #3**
  - c. It is larger than a lake and smaller than an ocean.
  - d. The sea of Galilee
3. Who represents the fish? Circle all that apply. **Study Guide Q. #4**
  - a. Believers
  - b. Non-believers
  - c. Animals
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4. What is the parable of the net being full?
  - a. The net is full of fish and no more can be caught.
  - b. All the souls in the net will go to heaven.
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  - d. God is satisfied His Gospel message has been delivered to all who need to hear it. **Study Guide Q. #5**
5. When the fishermen “drew to the shore,” what does this time signify?
  - a. It is the end of the age. **Matthew 13:49**
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  - d. The disciples and ministers are no longer allowed to preach the Gospel.

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