



Daily Verse and Comment

Matthew 13:47-50

(47) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: (48) Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (49) So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

King James Version

Within the inspired structure of the [parables](#), the Parable of the Dragnet pairs with the Parable of the Wheat and Tares ([Matthew 13:24-30](#)). The wheat and tares represent peoples of opposing spiritual origins: The wheat plants are the “sons of the kingdom,” while the tares are the “sons of the wicked one” ([Matthew 13:38](#)). At the time Jesus spoke the parable, the Pharisees were the clearest examples of tares.

The Parable of the Dragnet reiterates this distinction between two classifications of people, but with a significant added detail. Both parables in this pairing describe a gathering that occurs at the end of the age, as well as the future separation of the wicked from the righteous. Both speak of the wicked being burned, and both involve “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” However, the parables differ in Jesus' deliberate description of the dragnet collecting “some of *every kind*.”

In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, He distinguishes two different types of plants that appear nearly identical for most of their growing cycles. In the Parable of the Dragnet, though, the dragnet—representing the preaching of the gospel—brings in “some of every kind,” after which a sorting process occurs. The latter parable teaches that [God](#) does not base His judgment on race or ethnicity. A person does not have to be of the physical Israelite

“kind” to obtain favor in God's eyes, just as fishermen will accept multiple kinds of fish to sell.

The analogy Jesus uses here sounds a warning that is not apparent in the Wheat and Tares, where the focus is simply on whether God or [Satan](#) has “planted” an individual. When the fishermen searched through the dragnet on shore, their sorting would have included multiple criteria for determining which were good and which were bad. They would have discarded any unclean fish, a type of those who may have an enthusiastic interest in [the gospel](#) of the Kingdom yet have not been cleansed by Christ's sacrifice. (We can also see this spiritual condition in the improperly clothed wedding guest in [Matthew 22:11-14](#).) However, even among the *clean* fish, the fishermen would not have kept every specimen. If a fish had not grown enough or were obviously diseased, it would also have been burned—it held no value to the fishermen.

In the judgment at the end of the age, God requires more than just coming under the blood of Christ. To reiterate this sobering principle, Jesus uses a different analogy in [John 15:2-6](#):

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Even those who have been cleansed can still be thrown into the fire if they do not bear sufficient fruit. The branches do not—indeed, cannot—bear the fruit independently; it requires remaining attached to the Vine, [Jesus Christ](#). Christians are merely conduits for the fruit, but they must remain faithfully and loyally committed to the relationship to ensure the fruit's production.

If a believer's spiritual growth is insufficient or he or she becomes spiritually diseased (without seeking God's healing), he or she will be cast into the fire at the end of the age. The “wailing and gnashing of teeth” will come not only from those who have maintained an anti-God stance. It will also be the response of those who were cleansed by Christ's sacrifice but who “neglect so great salvation” ([Hebrews 2:3](#)) and fail to abide in Him (see also [Hebrews 6:4-8](#); [John 3:15-18](#); [I Corinthians 9:27](#)).

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[God's Kingdom in the Parables \(Part Four\)](#)

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