

The Parables of Jesus

Lesson 14

Parable of the Net – Matthew 13:47-50

Jesus' parable of the net reveals that finally there will come a day when the hypocrites are exposed as imposters. Their collective fates are in the hands of the Judge, Jesus Christ. This study has the unbeliever's last judgment in view.

Setting for the Parable

Jesus' parable of the net was spoken among His parable discourse which is found in Matthew 13. The topic of this parable is the last judgment...as it is with both the wheat & tares and sheep & goats parables. Jesus gave this parable to His intimate friends...His twelve disciples...and He included the interpretation along with the parable.

This parable was created to teach His disciples that the Kingdom of God includes a final judgment. The emphasis in this parable is placed on the judgment of unbelievers.

Telling of the Parable

In the parable of the net, Jesus uses a word better understood as dragnet. This is far different than the smaller hand held nets used in passages like Mark 1:16, Luke 5:2-6 or John 12:6-8.

A dragnet is a very long and tall net which had float devices at the top and sinker weights at the bottom. The dragnet was placed on the shore to begin the fishing. Fishermen on a boat would then be handed one end of the net and in a semicircle course bring their end back around to the shore. The dragnet was cast wide and deep. After a time, the fishermen on the shore would "drag" the "net" back to shore. Jesus called upon this particular net to begin his story to describe what judgment is like.

Meaning of the Parable

Jesus' parable of the net uses graphic images to symbolize spiritual elements of the Kingdom of God. This helps us picture the spiritual lessons He is teaching us. The parable of the net doesn't only use the dragnet to represent the Kingdom but it uses the net along with the catch and final selection of fish to describe it.

So for our understanding, the fishermen represent workers in the Kingdom, the sea represents the world and the individual fish represent people both saved and lost.

The parable goes on to say that after a time the net is pulled onto the shore and the catch is sorted. Some fish are placed in containers while others aren't. The fish that are unclean are then heaped on a pile and burned.

Similar to that activity, the Kingdom of God will soon find Jesus returning in the clouds. Then following the tribulation and 1000 year reign, people from all ages will be gathered and sorted...the good from the bad...the saved from the lost. The saved will receive eternal life and the lost will receive eternal death.

The overall message is pretty clear. The only way to escape the White Throne Judgment is to be righteous and that only happens by accepting His gift of salvation.

Get This!

This parable is not meant to scare you or to get you to doubt your salvation in any way. It's meant to have you examine yourself and make sure you're ready for heaven.

It's clear that Jesus taught that Christians will produce good works as a result of being saved. Unfortunately, there are many people going through the motions...doing good things but they've skipped the first step...getting saved.

Always remember that being a Christian and getting to heaven happens because of a personal individual relationship with Jesus Christ.