

Parable of the Draught Net – A Divine Separation

Matthew 13:47-50, *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered [“sunago” —to gather together] of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered [“sullego” -- to gather up] the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*

Sandwiched between two parables that teach the doctrine of final separation and judgement are the two parables of Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price. It is a grave warning of the consequences of self delusion. Man cannot determine who the true believers and the false believers are. But the LORD reveals to us that He knows from the very beginning. He will in the last days make it public knowledge for all to behold. Hypocrites are to be warned!

Casting a net into the sea describes the fishing trade. This was very common in Israel especially around the region of the Sea of Galilee. Disciples like Peter and his brother had a great affinity to this fishing trade, for they were expert fishermen before the LORD called them into the fulltime ministry. The net brings in all kinds of fish. Once the boat is full of fish, it is back to the shore for the separation of the good and bad fish. The good fish are gathered into vessels. The bad fish are cast away. Unlike today’s custom of casting the fish back into the sea if it is too small, the Israelites in the time of Christ separated the fish according to clean and unclean fish. These guidelines are found in **Leviticus 11:10-12**, *“And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you.”* Bad fish are unclean and considered an abomination to the Israelites. Fish without fins or scales like eels and sharks are considered unclean and unfit for consumption.

The good fish will be kept for personal consumption or sold in the market place. The unclean fish will be rejected and cast away. This illustrates the final part of the kingdom of heaven where there will be the separation.

Elements of the Parable of the Draught Net -- The parable describes the end of the world. The first gathering was ALL (good and bad fish) were gathered together. The second gathering was a separation where only the good fish were gathered up and kept. The bad fish was separated and cast away. The good fish represents the genuine believers. The bad or unclean fish represents unbelievers or false believers. The act of separation represents the severing of the wicked from the just. Casting the bad fish away represents casting the

false believers and unbelievers into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This is a picture of intense pain and punishment. It is a picture of Hell!

Application – The warning is clear to every professing Christian. He can deceive the church, all his friends, the pastors and all the leaders, even his wife, but he can never deceive God. Every wolf in sheep's clothing will be found out on the Day of Judgement.

Mistakes will not be made in the separation. The separation is perfect. The separation will be done by the angelic beings. Note that the text says the wicked will be severed from the just, and not the other way round. The just remain behind and the wicked will be sent to Hell for all eternity because they died in their sins without the Saviour Jesus Christ as their Mediator before God. The place of torment and punishment for sins committed argues against the teaching of annihilation. Annihilationists believe that those who die without Christ will not go to Hell but will be annihilated. Hence, their gospel message will be "believe in Christ and you will go to heaven. Reject Christ and die in your sins and you will be annihilated." This is a grave error in doctrine! It is a distorted understanding of the love of Christ that annihilationists believe in. They minimize the gravity of sin as well as the salvific work of Christ at Calvary by diminishing the penalty of sin.

Judgement from the LORD is not a threat. It is a warning of impending certainty. It is a prophetic event of the future act of the Judge of all judges. It is given to sinful man that he might repent and turn to Christ and be saved. Amen.