

Study Notes: Matthew 13:47-52
October 12, 2025: “Have You Understood?”
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“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

- As Jesus continued teaching in parables, He told a parable about a dragnet used for fishing. This was a common fishing practice of the day, and would have been familiar to His audience. After the net became full of all kinds of fish, the fishermen pulled it up and sorted the fish, keeping the good but throwing the bad away.
 - The Expositor’s Bible Commentary gives more information on the dragnet, “A *sagēnē* (lit., ‘dragnet,’ used only here in the NT) was drawn along between two boats or tied on shore at one end and put out by a boat at the other end, which was then drawn to land by ropes.”
 - The phrase “all kinds of fish” or more literally “all races,” emphasizes God’s judgment over all peoples, races, and nations.
- Jesus compared this to what will happen at the end of the age. The angels will separate the wicked who have rejected Jesus from the righteous who have accepted Jesus. Those who do not know Jesus will face terrible judgment, which is described as a blazing furnace with weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- The point of this parable is much like that of the parable of the weeds, although the focus of this parable is more on the judgment, rather than what happens prior to it. The New American Commentary explains, “The parable of the dragnet does not focus on the preliminary situation of good and bad existing together, but it nevertheless teaches the three-part message that God will judge all people on the last day, gather together the righteous for further service and safekeeping, and discard as worthless those who are unredeemed.”

“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked. “Yes,” they replied.

- After Jesus told this parable, He asked the disciples if they had understood. This question applies not just to this final parable, but to the last three parables, which are often grouped together.
- The disciples responded “Yes,” which is interesting, given that they had not fully understood everything, as evidenced by some of their earlier questions. However, they probably did understand these parables better, and the idea that they needed to hear and put the truth of these parables into practice.

He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

- In response to the disciples' affirmation that they had understood, Jesus told another short parable. In this parable, an owner of the house brought out both new and old treasures. Jesus said that those who became disciples should teach both old truths about God and have been willing to accept the new things that He was doing, and teach them also.
- The New American Commentary notes, "Jesus probably means that as his disciples teach God's will, they will be drawing out the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures ('things old'), while showing how they are fulfilled and apply in the kingdom age ('things new')."
- The Pillar New Testament Commentary adds, "Jesus is pointing out that there are fresh insights that are of value and that there are also teachings that have stood the test of time. If the word order is significant, the new matters more than the old and Jesus is saying that the new teachings his followers are embracing do not do away with the old teachings (those in the Old Testament), but are the key to understanding them. The new age has dawned, and it is only in recognition of that fact that the old can be understood in its essential function of preparing the way for the new."