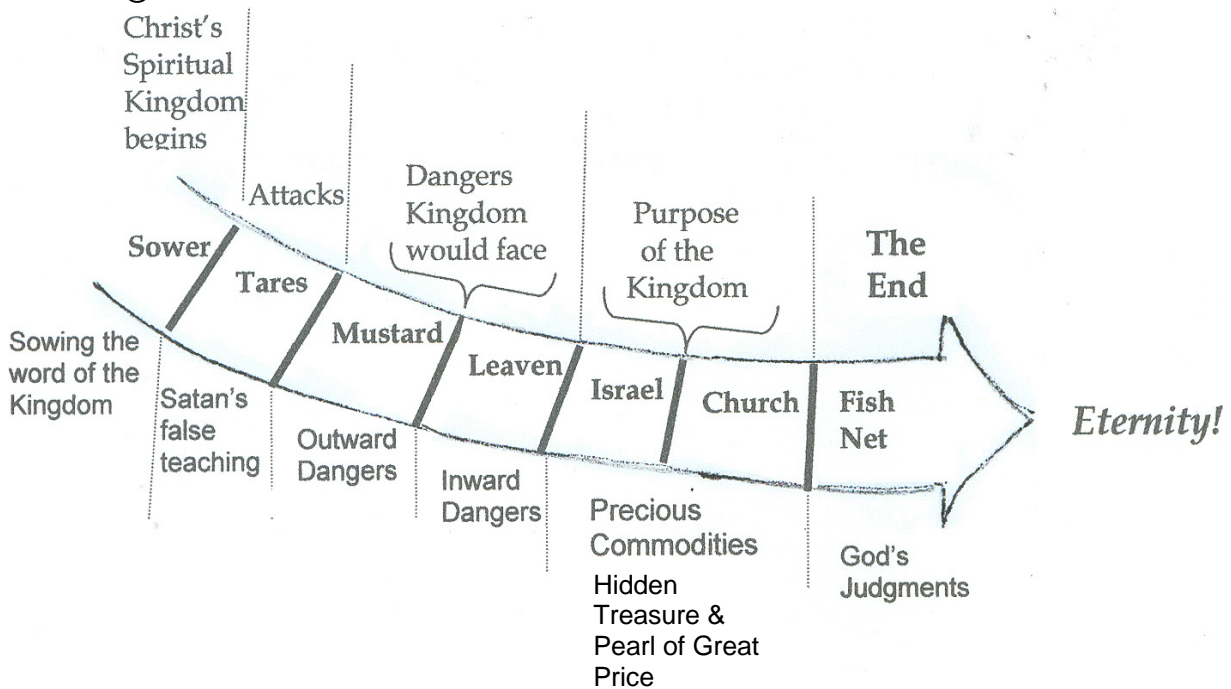
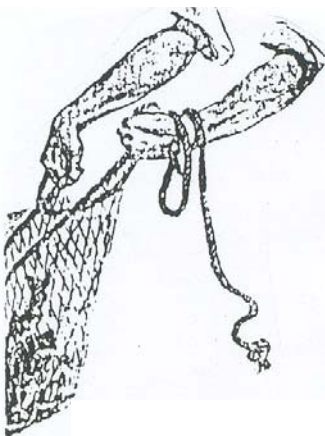


A Panorama of Christ's Kingdom as given by Jesus in His Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13



After giving in the first two parables the work of His Kingdom and Satan's hindrance — [the Sower of wheat and the tares] — Jesus reveals in the next two parables the difficulties the church will face down through the ages — [the Mustard seed and the Leaven] — He then gives two more parables showing His purpose in establishing His Kingdom — [the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price] — Jesus come to a grand finale, the final climax of His series of parables on "the Kingdom of heaven" — or — "the Kingdom of God," — the parable of the fishnet, showing the final destiny of good and evil!

7. The Parable of The Dragnet



Matthew 13:47-50, "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 fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

One more parable remains to complete one's understanding of "the kingdom of heaven." It is this parable of the "Dragnet." We have come to the end!

Remember, the kingdom of heaven (or the kingdom of God) is the rule or government of God within the heart and life of the believer. Let this thought sink into

your heart and mind -- Nowhere in this present world does God have subjects that His reign is likened unto a kingdom, except in the lives of Christians. Each of these seven parables are illustrations to help the believer to understand the purposes - and outcome - of this "*kingdom of heaven*."

EVEN THE "ORDER" OF THESE PARABLES
SUPPLIES A KEY TO THEIR INTERPRETATION

[Note the diagram as the start of this lesson]

1. The first parable, "*the parable of the sower*," reveals the introduction of the kingdom of heaven, that introductory work -- being the sowing of the seed of "*the word of the kingdom*" in the hearts of believers.
2. The second parable, "*the parables of the wheat and the tares*," showing the work of Satan in his seeking to destroy God's rule in the believer's life
3. The third parable, "*the parable of the mustard seed*," reveals the giant-like monstrosity of an "outward" growth, which is only man's work and was never the intent or purpose of God's kingdom.
4. The fourth parable, "*the parable of leaven*," warns of the "inward" invasion of corruption to destroy the real purpose of Christ's kingdom.

The last three parables were not spoken to the multitude, but, rather, they were spoken to Jesus' disciples only and they treat the internal, hidden aspects of the kingdom of heaven.

5. The fifth parable, "*the parable of the hidden treasure*," shows "*the kingdom of God*" as a precious treasure, hidden -- (Israel) -- to be revealed sometime later.
6. The sixth parable, "*the parable of the pearl of great price*," -- (the Church) -- we see that "*the kingdom of God*" is a process Christ Jesus takes the believer through in order to develop the worth and potential of each believer.

When the student comes to this seventh parable, he finds that it is quite unlike the other six parables. It has a distinct message that we would do well to understand. This seventh parable is bringing the kingdom of God to the conclusion, the climax, in its earthly purpose. *We have come to the end!*

Up to this point of the seven parables, "one" man is at work, sowing the good-seed, seeking a treasure and a pearl of great price, however, now, for the first time, the pronoun "*they*" is introduced . . . "*Which, when it (the net) was full, they (the fishermen) drew to shore . . .*" [Matthew 13:48].

Jesus said, "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" Followers of Christ are the "*human instruments*" whom God uses to establish His kingdom. They have been commanded, "*to go into all the world and preach the Gospel* (that is, proclaim the Good News of the kingdom). They are to "*cast the net*" and the object of the "*net*" is simply to draw out "*good fish*."

The "*sea*," as we have seen, represents all humanity, standing for "*peoples, multitudes and nations*" (Revelation 17:15).

The "fishermen" are those who are used of God to draw, or gather, the good fish.

It is interesting to note the *inconspicuousness* of these "fishermen." in this parable. They are not even mentioned in verse 47, and verse 48 only refers to them as "they" -- [verse 48] -- (that is in the King James Translation of the New Testament).

The "net" surely must be referring to *professing* Christendom, those who appear to be a part of the kingdom of God, because they gather in the "good and bad." However, in the end, the great separation takes place.

We have now come to the end of the age, in our study of the kingdom parables, when the results of the kingdom of heaven will be determined.

*"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and **gathered of every kind**, which **when it was full** they drew to shore . . ."* What a sobering thought!

The question we need to ask is . . .

What is the fishermen's object, their one aim and design?

"...gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

A surprising thought is that there were some "bad" fish in the net -- and these fishermen gather the "good" into vessels, and "cast the bad away." They were interested in only gathering in the "good" fish.

Let us keep in mind the *Triple Approach* to these parables:

1. THE PRIMARY INTERPRETATION

The primary interpretation of this seventh parable is described on the proceeding paragraphs.

2. THE PROPHETICAL REVELATION

The prophetic revelation is given in verses 49-50 of Matthew 13:

"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 fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Note, Jesus said, "This is how it will be at the end of the age."

3. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION

It is this "Practical Application" which we are mainly interested in, in this study.

We need to ask ourselves the question: "*How does this seventh parable apply to me, personally, in Christ's reign and rule over my life?*"

*"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a **net** . . ."* Within our lives is gathered fish . . . good and bad . . . and it is up to us to "gather the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." This hardly needs further comment.

Matthew 13:51-52, "*Have you understood all these things?*" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. He said to them, "*Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.*"

