

Seeking My King & His Kingdom

#26 Pearl Of Great Price

The Kingdom of Heaven began with the sowing of the Word of God in the hearts of men. Much of the seed did not bear fruit, but some was fruitful.

The next 3 parables of Matt. 13, concern opposition the Kingdom of Heaven would encounter.

- The Parable of the Tares explains that Satan will plant poisonous weeds [counterfeit Christians] beside true believers or wheat. This mixture will continue until the end of the age when Christ returns and the angels separate the false from the true.
- The Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven represent the corruption of the visible Church through abnormal, false outward growth and the inner corruption of false teaching.

This enormous pseudo-kingdom or apostate church is Satan's most successful strategy. By it he has deceived many to embrace Christianity without a saving relationship to Jesus Christ.

It would seem Satan is winning! But the test is at the end of the Age - not during the Age.

The final three parables shift from opposition to address the outcome of the Kingdom.

They answer the question, "How will this present age end?" The disappointments of the first four parables are now eclipsed by triumph. Not all of the seed is wasted!

Satan will be defeated, God's purposes will prevail and Christ's Kingdom will be established on earth.

I Corinthians 10:32 Don't become a stumbling block to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God.

In broad strokes the Lord paints the human race into these 3 groups. The next 3 parables will show us what the Lord is doing on the earth in relation to these 3 groups.

Hidden Treasure - Israel Pearl of Great Price—Church Net - Gentiles

Matt. 13:45-46 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

⁴⁶ Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Note: The Pearl is a single object.

Common Interpretation:

1. The merchant was a sinner who earnestly desired and diligently sought salvation.
 - a. Ultimately his efforts were rewarded by finding Christ, the Pearl of great price.
 - b. Having found Christ, as presented in the Gospel, the sinner sold all he had.
 - He forsook all his flesh held dear.
 - He abandoned his worldly companions.
 - He surrendered his will and dedicated his life to God.
 - This process secured his salvation.

Problems With The Common Interpretation

1. Contradicts The Gospel Plan Of Salvation as found in Scripture.
2. This approach puts the seeker totally in control of his destiny.

3. Before God sought us out, we were commandment-breaking sinners.

I John 2:4 He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

4. Scripture disproves we are the merchant seeking to "buy" the Kingdom of God or Christ.

a. Sinners do not naturally seek Christ. We are not the active agent in choosing Christ.

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,...

Rom. 3:10-11 "Not even one person is righteous. No one understands. No one searches for God.

5. Jesus Christ seeks and saves the sinner. The Shepherd seeks the sheep.

Luke 19:10 The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

6. Sinners have absolutely nothing of any value they can possibly use to obtain Christ.

Isaiah 64:6 We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment; We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Romans 3:12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

7. God gives Jesus Christ to us as a free gift. [Romans 5:15-18].

a. He doesn't ask or want payment from us [Romans 3:24; 8:32; 4:4; 11:6].

b. If the pearl is Jesus Christ or eternal life, it contradicts Scripture regarding God's grace.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

II Cor. 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

Conclusion: By putting a price on God's free gift, it adds a human work and consequently denies the completed work of Jesus Christ. It is thus exposed as a doctrine of antichrists.

Scriptural Interpretation

1. Jesus is the Merchant who buys the pearl.

2. The Church is the Pearl of great price.

a. The Church is composed of all regenerated Jews and Gentiles from Pentecost until the return of Christ for His Church [Body Of Christ] at the Rapture.

3. Calvary's Cross is the price paid for the Pearl.

I. The Merchant

A. The merchant made trips far and wide to buy specific merchandise in which he had expertise.

B. The context of the parable gives no indication he was pursuing anything but pearls.

He knew the real worth of pearls. He assessed the value and was willing to pay the price.

C. "Seeking" helps identify the merchant as Jesus Christ.

1. Seeking = "to depart from one place and arrive at another."

2. Jesus did this to pay the price for the pearl.

He departed from heaven and arrived on earth to complete His mission.

Phil. 2:6-7 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

II Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. He gave up everything—He sold all—to possess us!

II. The Pearl

Consider: Why did our Lord choose the symbol of the pearl for His Church?

Note: In Lev. 11:9-12, God told the Jews to consider anything from the water that did not have fins and scales to be an abomination.

1. The Pearl has a Lowly Origin - its host is an oyster.
2. The Pearl Is Formed Deep In The Ocean - Hidden in secret while being formed
 - a. None but the eye of God watches the oyster transforming an intrusion into a pearl of intrinsic beauty and great worth.
3. The oyster is at home in the depths of the ocean; a scavenger living off the garbage that sinks to the bottom.
4. The pearl is the ONLY gem which is the Product Of Living Matter, an oyster.
5. The pearl is produced as the Result Of An Injury suffered by a living organism - oyster.
6. A pearl grows out of hurt. A little particle of sand or irritating substance gets inside the shell of the oyster and is a constant irritant.
7. The oyster has no hands to brush the irritant out; no means of defense.
8. The only recourse for the oyster is to transform the irritant into something which is no longer a source of irritation.
9. The oyster protects itself by SLOWLY layering the irritant with nacre (mother-of-pearl) until, out of much pain and suffering, it forms an object of great beauty - a pearly luster.
10. Initially, the pearl was embedded in a mass of living but corruptible flesh.
11. Then it is separated and cleansed from its surroundings.
12. The irritant becomes a gem of great worth clothed with a beauty and purity not its own.
13. Pearls are brought above the water and freed from the unclean flesh and elevated in worth to the status of a precious gem.

Compare To The Church:

[OT: No mention of a pearl. Many Gentile traders came to Galilee looking for valuable pearls and would pay fabulous prices to purchase them -- not for themselves but for their kings.]

Note: The Bible often uses a sea to represent multitudes of godless peoples and/or multitudes of nations, out of which the Church is taken.

Rev. 17:15 The waters which you saw, where the harlot [prostitute] sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues [languages.]

1. By nature, our origin, like the oyster, was in the filth, mire and ruin of the fall.

Eph. 2:11-12 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time Separated From Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, Having No Hope And Without God In The World.

2. Jesus Christ became what we are so we could become like Him.

II Cor. 5:21 He who knew no sin was made sin for us.

3. Rom. 3:23-26 Spiritually, we are the constant irritant due to our nature and sin.

4. Jesus Christ, through the travail and pain our sin caused Him, covered us with His righteousness and is transforming the irritant to the desired thing.

Because God loves us, we are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. We can gradually become a thing of beauty, clothed with the righteousness of Him who bought us. [Rom. 3:24-26; Eph. 2:13]

5. The Church came out of the wounded side of Jesus Christ.

The Church has been made possible by His death and sacrifice.

6. The Pearl of great price is the one body of God's elect people, His spiritual assembly, called the ekklesia.

7. Just as the formation of the pearl is happening in secret, The Church is being formed in a hidden fashion. No man can see the Church of the Living God. Behind the scaffolding with which we concern ourselves there is the Church, which is His body, growing up into a holy temple in, and for, the Lord.

Colossians 3:3 Our "life is hidden with Christ in God."

8. The Church on earth is still surrounded with a mass of corruptible flesh.

It seems the professed Church is deeply embedded in worldly things.

9. The production of the pearl is a tedious process of waiting while the pearl is being secretly and surely formed. For nineteen-and-a-half centuries, His Church has been in the making through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church has been forming, and the world has hardly noticed, if at all, that this awesome process was slowly progressing right under its nose.

10. The Lord, by His Spirit, is occupied with the purification of His own. He seeks us with an efficient, organized, pre-planned goal in mind. He will ultimately present the whole Church to Himself, "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." [Eph. 5:26-27]

11. God will take the pearl, the Church, from among the ungodly just as the oyster must be lifted from the muck and mire of the sea bottom.

III. The Pearl - God's High Cost To Acquire The Church

The Pearl has no real intrinsic worth. Its value resides in the immense cost paid for it.

Our sin debt is so great it takes a great price to free us. In order to gain us and form the pearl which He so desperately wants, loves and cherishes, He came, gave all He had and took our place. He came into the place of hurt, agony, heartache, loneliness, sorrow, shame and darkness, and became what we are.

I Cor. 6:20; 7:23 You are not your own; you have been bought with a price.

Consider: Will I ever fathom what it cost Him to redeem me?

Phil. 2:6-8 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

II Cor. 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

Col. 1:12-14 "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"

Titus 2:14 Jesus Christ, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

I Pet. 1:18-19 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Consider: He pursues us as a man courts a woman to be his bride, willing to spill His own blood as her purchase price (Acts 20:28).

We are the ones who have wounded our Lord, as in that hymn we often sing:

Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

What greater price could have been paid for the church than the life of Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice?

May we never forget the pit from which we were dug!

A Pearl is a perfect symbol of the Lord's Church. The oyster's response to the irritation is to transform and transmute the injurious object by covering it with a soft and delicate nacre which is built up layer by layer until it forms a lustrous and shining and beautiful jewel.

In the treasure and the pearl are the two major purposes of God for Israel and His Church from a spiritual point of view. His purposes for both are realized, even though there is the dual line of development of good and evil culminating in the second coming of Christ.

The Treasure Is The Nation Israel which embodies the ultimate solution to the problem of establishing world peace and harmony. Until Israel comes into a right relationship with its Messiah and Lord, there is no way men can work out peaceful international relationships. To bring Israel into its own Jesus came and gave all He had and bought the field so that He might one day bring to pass world prosperity and peace.

Isa. 53:12 He poured out His soul unto death.

Phil. 2:7 "He emptied himself."

He exhausted His treasury, pauperized himself so He might purchase the field containing the treasure.

The concept of The Church as a living organism composed of living stones which are added each time a believer is saved, was an apt portrayal of the formation of the true church in the present age, and made clear that this is one of the major purposes of God in the interadvent period.

Tie two parables together:

1. Israel is going to be hidden again in the world of humanity. Human governments will stumble on in blindness and folly, ever dreaming of world peace, never able to find it, and never knowing that the secret of it lies in a little nation in one obscure corner of the world, which for centuries was lost and forgotten, which is only now beginning gradually to come to life, and which still does not know the secrets of its own nature. But, because of that treasure, our Lord bought the world. He will establish Israel in His glorious Millennial Kingdom.

The earth should be filled with righteousness as the waters cover the sea

All the glowing, beautiful dreams of the prophets should be fulfilled.

Isaiah 32 describes in such magnificent language the glory of a restored earth when the desert shall blossom like the rose and the curse shall be removed from nature and from the animal world. The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the cow with the bear shall feed, and a little child shall lead them. Swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

Men shall live in peace and harmony, each one under his own fig tree. The burdens shall be lifted from the weary shoulders of mankind and the springtime of the earth shall come.

2. The Pearl, the Church: The pearl will be lifted out of the troubled sea of human sorrow to be a people through which He shall manifest His grace and glory in all eternity.

Our Lord is making for Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

God is working out His purposes through the daily grind and all the turmoil and pressures and problems and perplexities of our lives. These difficulties are part of the process.

They are God's instruments sent to do His work in your life. Don't resist them, don't gripe and moan your way through them all. Welcome them, learn to rejoice in them.

II Cor. 12:9-10 I glory in my infirmities. Because when I am weak, then he is strong. His strength is made perfect in my weakness,"

As these trials come to us, God is preparing us to be an instrument for untold blessing in the coming ages to manifest and demonstrate the immeasurable riches of his grace.

II Cor. 4:17 "This slight, momentary affliction is preparing for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Hidden in this world is the treasure of the field, which shall bring to pass at last the hopes and the dreams of men for world peace. Hidden also is this marvelous mystery of the pearl.

God sees a new thing being formed -- a marvelous, magnificent pearl which shall be shining and flashing in the heavenly places as a testimony through all eternity of the glory and the greatness of our God.

The world may not honor us now. They may not consider us worthy of anything. But when He displays His church, He will reveal us for what we are: a glorious and wonderful creative act of the great God, arrayed in the radiating splendor, the sun-like brilliance, of the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord.