

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Mat 13:44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

The "treasure" is Israel. The "field" is the world. The "man" is the Son of man who gave Himself to redeem the nation Israel. This is not a sinner buying the gospel because the gospel is not hidden in a field. Israel, however, is actually buried in the world today. Someone says, "Well, they are a nation right now." They are, but they certainly are having a struggle. They will not be able to enjoy their land until they receive it from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was very much interested in reading a paper that came from Israel concerning a convention of certain scientists. In a picture I noted above the platform a great sign, printed in both Hebrew and English, which read something like this: SCIENCE WILL BRING PEACE TO THIS LAND. May I say to you, friend, science will not bring peace to Israel—nor to any country. Only the Prince of Peace is able to do that.

Actually, Israel is buried throughout the world. The largest population of Jews is not in Israel but is in New York City. And Jewish people are scattered throughout the world. But God is not through with Israel as a nation. The apostle Paul wrote: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew ..." (Rom_11:1-2).

Paul believed that the Lord was not through with Israel. Zechariah, one of the last writers in the Old Testament, wrote that a new day would come for Israel: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one who mourned for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zec_12:10).

The prophet Jeremiah in many passages speaks of the regathering of the people of Israel and of God bringing them to their own land. That time is still in the future. When God regathers them, it will be by miracles so great that they will even forget their miraculous deliverance from Egypt which has been celebrated longer than any other religious holiday. God is not through with the nation Israel, and this parable makes that fact very clear. Israel is the treasure hid in a field, and Christ is the One who "for joy therefore he sells all that he has and buys that field." In fact, He gave Himself to redeem the nation. Our Lord purchased them with His blood, just as He bought your salvation and my salvation. Zechariah writes of the cleansing which will take place at the time of Christ's return to this earth: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec_13:1). – McGee

Do your actions reflect that Jesus gave it all for you? Through adoption, we too are that treasure! If you don't believe you are worthy and a priceless treasure, then you know that thought is not from God!

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

Mat 13:45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Matthew 13:44-58 Parables Hidden treasure, the Pearl and the casting net

The popular interpretation of this parable says that the sinner is the merchant, and the pearl of great price is Christ. The sinner sells all that he has that he might buy Christ. One hymn says:

I have found the pearl of greatest price.

My heart doth sing for joy.

And sing I must for Christ is mine;

Christ shall my song employ.

I cannot accept this interpretation, and I have dismissed it as unworthy of thoughtful consideration. To begin with, who is looking for goodly pearls? Are sinners looking for salvation? My Bible does not read that way, nor has that been my experience as a minister. Sinners are not looking for salvation. The merchantman cannot be the sinner because he has nothing with which to pay. To begin with, he is not seeking Christ, and if he were, how could he buy Him? The merchantman sells all that he has—how can a sinner sell all that he has when he is dead in trespasses and sins (see Eph_2:1)? Further, the Scriptures are very clear that Christ and salvation are not for sale. Salvation is a gift— “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh_3:16). God so loved that He gave. And in Rom_6:23 we are told that “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The correct interpretation of this parable reveals Christ as the merchantman. He left His heavenly home and came to this earth to find a pearl of great price. He found lost sinners and died for them by shedding His precious blood. He sold all that He had to buy us and redeem us to God. Paul told this to the Corinthians: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2Co_8:9). He redeems us to God—He bought us.

Now let's look at the pearl for a moment. The pearl represents the church. A pearl is not a stone like the diamond. It is formed by a living organism. A grain of sand or other foreign matter intrudes itself into the shell of a small sea creature. It hurts and harms it. The response of the organism is to send out a secretion that coats over the foreign matter. That fluid builds up until a pearl is formed—not a ruby or a diamond, but a beautiful white pearl. A pearl is not like other gems. It cannot be cut to enhance its beauty. It is formed intact. The minute you cut it; you ruin it.

The pearl was never considered very valuable by the Israelites. Several verses of Scripture give us this impression. For example, in Job_28:18 pearls are classed with coral. Although the pearl was not considered valuable among the Hebrews, it was very valuable to the Gentiles. When Christ used the figure of “goodly pearls” (v. Mat_13:45), I imagine that His disciples wondered why. Oriental people gave to the pearl a symbolic meaning of innocence and purity, fit only for kings and potentates.

With this information in our thinking, let's look again at the parable.

Christ came to this earth as the merchantman. He saw man in sin, and He took man's sin and bore it in His own body. Our sin was an intrusion upon Him—it was that foreign matter. And He was made sin for us. As someone has put it, I got into the heart of Christ by a spear wound. Christ “... was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ...” (Isa_53:5).

Notice Christ's response to the sinner. He puts around us His own righteousness. He covers us with His own white robe of righteousness. "... we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus ..." (Eph_2:10). Christ sees us, not as we are now but as we shall be someday, presented to Him as "... a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph_5:27). Christ sold all that He had in order that He might gain the church. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1Jn_3:2).

When we come to the last book of the Bible, the Book of the Revelation, we find a description of the New Jerusalem, the future home of the church. Notice the emblem on the outside of the city—the gates are made of pearls! That is no accident, friend; it is planned that way by Christ's design. He is the merchantman "Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." – McGee

The Parable of the Net

Mat 13:47-50 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels but threw the bad away. So, it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

"So shall it be at the end of the world"—the word world is the Greek *aiōn*, meaning "age." The Bible does not teach the end of this world. It is true that time will be no more, but then eternity begins, and as far as I'm concerned, I can't tell the difference (and I have never met anyone else who could). The end of the age simply means the time when Christ will return to establish His Kingdom on earth. – McGee

Our Lord makes it clear in this section that it is a terrible thing to be lost.

I was very much interested in reading a scientific paper written by men who were presenting certain scientific evidence in several different fields, and their point was that science was not sure of many things. For example, they were not sure exactly what the atom blast would do. They were not sure of the consequences of germ warfare. They were not sure about the effect of the birth control pill. And many other things were mentioned. Then one of the scientists said this, "It's just like this matter of eternity. You may not know whether there is a heaven or a hell, but you had better make sure that you are going to heaven because even if you happen to be wrong, you'll be all right. But if you are wrong, it is surely going to be bad." And our Lord made it very clear that it is indeed going to be very bad.

It is considered sophisticated in our day to be a suave person. Certainly, you will not be considered a square if you deny the existence of hell. But, my friend, in reality you don't know a thing about it, do you? You may say, "Well, you don't know either." Well, I know what is in this Book. And since the Bible has been accurate in everything it has predicted, and since in my own life I have proven it true, I take it for granted that it is accurate in its description of hell. And I work on that premise—and it's more than a premise.

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If you were told that a hurricane was going to hit your town, what would you do? After you had been given the information, someone might come along and say, "Oh, they warned of a hurricane ten years ago, and no hurricane came." I think you would say "Well, they might have been wrong ten years ago, but they could be right this time; so, I think I'll go to a storm cellar." You would be a fool if you didn't. What about the man who rejects Christ's warning of hell? He says, "I'll take my chance." It will be too bad if he is wrong. Our Lord Jesus Himself makes this fact very clear in this parable when He says, "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."

Does the graphic description of Hell motivate you to step out of your comfort zone to save those that are lost?

New and Old Treasures

Mat 13:51-52 Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

This is a very personal verse, especially for those of us who teach and preach the Word of God. I am to bring forth both the old and new. Some folks say to me, "Oh, I've heard all of that before." Of course, they have. But it is my business to bring forth old things, and I do hope to bring forth a few new thoughts, also. – McGee