

## **The Pear of Great Price**

### **Parables of the Times**

In the seven parables of Matthew 13, Jesus gave His disciples a picture of what the earth would be like after His departure. There would be two periods of time: first the church age, in which we are now living, and then the Great Tribulation, which is yet to come.

Three of the Lord's parables describe life in the church age. The parables of the sower, the mustard seed, and the yeast all tell how faith comes and how it grows. The theme of all three parables is that the kingdom of God will start with a small beginning, but it will grow and produce great results.

These parables are followed by two others that describe how, at the end of the age, the angels will separate the righteous from the wicked, throwing the wicked into the "fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Connecting the parables of the church age and those of the Great Tribulation, we find two parables of great sacrificial love. I believe these two short parables, one of finding treasure in a field, the other of finding the pearl of great price, are especially timely and significant for us, providing insights into God's design for these last days.

### **The Treasure in a Field**

*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. " (Matthew 13:44)*

The man in this parable found the treasure, hid it again, sold everything he owned, and then purchased the field. I believe this man was the Lord Jesus, and the treasure He found was the nation of Israel. The field He purchased was the entire world. Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world so that anyone who believed in Him would have eternal life, but He came first of all for His own people, Israel.

Israel is here described as a treasure which was hidden in a field. A treasure is

made up of many types of precious gems, such as diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. In Scripture, God used twelve such gems to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. In Exodus 28, God commanded Moses to place twelve gemstones on the breastplate of the high priest, one for each of the twelve tribes. He goes into great detail, naming each of the stones by name and telling how to place them row by row. Then He tells Moses: "And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes." Exodus 28:21

### **Hidden Twice**

When the man in the parable discovered the treasure, it was hidden. When he went to purchase the field, he hid the treasure again. As a nation, Israel was started in obscurity and has been returned again to that hidden place.

When the Lord began the nation of Israel, He found one man, Abram, and called him out from among the heathen. From this one man began a natural and spiritual race which numbers today as the stars of heaven (Genesis 15:5).

As Abraham and Sarah learned to trust the Lord, their promised son, Isaac, was born. The treasure was forming. From Isaac came Jacob and from Jacob the twelve sons. The nation grew in captivity in Egypt and left for Canaan with over two million. The treasure reached its peak when Jesus was born.

But when Jesus came to Israel, they did not receive Him. They rejected Him and finally nailed Him to the Cross. Jesus had already warned the Jewish religious leaders of His day that He would turn to the Gentiles if they rejected Him as their Messiah (Matthew 21:45). On the day of Pentecost, God turned to the Gentile nations and Israel was hidden again.

The good news is that Israel will not be hidden forever. Their time will come again. When the Church is caught up to heaven in the Rapture, God will dig Israel out of obscurity and use them again. The time of their unveiling will be the seven years of tribulation.

Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). The treasure will again be revealed to the world one day. It will be revealed by the One who purchased the entire field, the One Who paid for the sins of the world.

In the meantime, God is sculpting another work of beauty. He is building the pearl of great price until it is time to again unearth the treasure from the field.

### **The Pearl of Great Price**

*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. " (Matthew 13:45,46)*

When I was growing up, our ministers would tell us the pearl of great price was the Lord Jesus. We even had a hymn which told of Jesus, our pearl of great price.

But, as I found out later, this was not true. The parable of the pearl is not about Jesus. It's about the Church. You see, Jesus was never purchased—but the Church was. The pearl is the Church, of which you and I are a part. This pearl was so beautiful, the merchant man was willing to sell everything He had to buy it.

The merchant man is the Lord Jesus. After discovering us. He sold all by going to the Cross and dying for our sins. He did not do this for Himself, but for you and me. What a wonderful love Jesus has for us!

He died to redeem us, to purchase us for Himself. Once we accept Jesus, we belong to Him. The Church is our Lord's most valuable possession, His pearl of great price.

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