5. THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Matthew 13:44, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

Something very significant takes place at this point, Christ sends the multitude away, enters the house again, and spoke this parable to His disciples only!

Matthew 13:34-36 states, "Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: 'I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.' then He left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to Him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.'"

From this fifth parable we see a treasure hid in a field, A "man" finds it and hides it again. He sells "all that he has" and buys the field.

The "field" in the first, second and third parables is "the world," [The Greek word which this is translated from is, "kosmos," meaning mankind - made up of families, tribes and nations of all kinds]. There should be no problem as to the meaning of the "field" here in this fifth parable. The "field" in this parable must be the same as the other parables . . . the world.!

And, it is only logical to conclude that the "Man" in this fifth parable is the same as the "Man" pictured in the other parables, that is, Christ Jesus, Himself!

The big question, then, is, what is the "treasure??"

The treasure cannot be "salvation," for the simple reason that one does not accidentally stumble upon salvation, as this "man" finds this treasure in a field, nor can one "buy" salvation, as this one buys this treasure, but, rather salvation is openly declared to whosoever will.

This "treasure" cannot be the Church, as some teach, because the whole of Christ's teachings is that the Church is the "light of the world, not to be hidden in the world."

Looking at the PROPHETIC REVELATION, the fact that Jesus dismissed the multitude and took His disciples into the house, has great significance. Christ was sharing the form His kingdom was to assume after His departure.

These words to the "disciples only" were to reassure their hearts. Jesus had just told them, in the first parable of the sower, Christ reveals that only a fractional portion of the good seed would take root and bear fruit; in the second parable of the tares, Christ reveals that the Devil would turn farmer and over-sow the field with "tares;" in the third parable of the mustered seed, Christ warns there would be a development so rapid that it would be like a little mustard-seed growing up into a "tree," with wide spreading branches, where the Devil and his agents would find shelter; and in the fourth parable of leaven, Jesus announces that into the "meal" (emblem of pure truth) a foreign and corrupting element would be introduced, which would ultimately effect the whole loaf.
Now, Jesus takes His disciples aside and shares with them the parables of the treasure and the pearl, in order to reassure their hearts.

Jesus, speaking, not of His true Church, but, rather, of "professing Christiandom" on earth, and He warns them of an outward development that would turn out to be so tragic, however, it was not, in anyway, a failure on the part of God! Jesus begins to explain that there were two bodies . . . two elect peoples . . . who are inexpressible precious in His sight, and, though them, He would manifest the inexpressible riches of His grace and glory!

Jesus shows His disciples, that in the realm of His kingdom of heaven, (the realm of His dominion), there were two elect companies, one likened unto a "treasure hid in a field," symbolizing the literal nation of Israel; and the other likened unto a "pearl," symbolizing the one body which has a heavenly calling . . . the Church!

Another key in unlocking this fifth parable, as well as the two parables which follow, is indicated in the way Jesus divided the whole series of these seven parables of the kingdom. You will note the seven parables are divided into two groups: the first four parables form one group and the last three parables form the second group. The first four parables were spoken by the seaside in the hearing of the multitudes, the last three parables were spoken inside the house only to the disciples! The first four parables are divided into two's, (as shown on page 5 of this study). The first two parables show the establishing of Christ's kingdom, the second two [parables 3 and 4] show the difficulties Christ's kingdom would face through the ages.

The last three parables, look at Christ's kingdom from God's point of view. The fifth and sixth parables [the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price] relate God's thoughts on Christ's kingdom, and shows what God is doing within the kingdom

PROPHETICALLY speaking, this parable of "the hidden treasure" is God's temporary "hiding" His treasure, Israel, - setting her aside until the fullness of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

It is amazing how Scripture will explain itself, when one takes the time and effort to investigate what God says about something, instead of grasping at easy "surface" explanations.

Interestingly, Israel is referred to as God's "treasure" in Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 14:2 and Psalm 135:4.

God teachings in Romans 11:25-26, "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.'"

Note, that it was the temporary "hiding" of this treasure, Israel, that was God's way of making salvation possible for all mankind. Listen to the words of Paul, speaking of the "treasure," Israel:
Romans 11:28, "As far as the gospel is concerned they [Israel] are enemies on your account . . . [that is, God rejects them, to make room for you] . . . but as far as election is concerned, they [Israel] are loved on account of the patriarchs, (verses 30-32), "Just as you [Gentiles] who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their [Israel's] disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you . . . [Just as you Gentiles. At one time had not yielded unto God, and yet now you have received mercy by Israel's refusal to yield, so they also have now refused to yield but someday they will share in God's mercy upon you.]."

Keep in mind that we are dealing with a **Triple Approach** in understanding these parables of the kingdom:

1. **The Primary Interpretation**, [that is, God's plan for Israel and the Church]
2. **The Practical Application**, [God's kingdom in the believer's life]
3. **The Prophetic Revelation**, [the prophetic view of God's plan for mankind].

At the risk of repetition, I remind you of these three different approaches in understanding these parables. While I am, also, presenting the "Prophetic Revelation" in this study, in order to give the student a grasp of the entire meaning of this passage in Matthew 13, however, my **main** purpose for the study is the "Practical Application." In doing so, however, we must keep these three areas clear, or there will be confusion.

**THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION**, in light of the kingdom of God in the believer's life, in this parable of the hidden treasure, would be, "the kingdom of God" - the wonderful, precious supremacy of the Lord, Jesus Christ - is to be hidden within our hearts. This "treasure," purchased at great price, is our inner, hidden resource of life.

The world will not see, nor understand, but in times of difficulty, persecution, and hardship we quietly "turn it over to the Lord's reign" and let Him work it out.

**CHRIST'S RULE BECOMES THE BELIEVER'S MOTIVATION FOR LIVING AND GIVES TRUE JOY!**

**6. THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE!**

Matthew 13:45-46, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

This sixth parable is probably the best known and yet, the most misunderstood or wrongly interpreted than any of the seven parables of the kingdom of heaven.
A grasp of the seven lessons taught by these seven parables will enable the student to live under Christ's reign and rule, and keep him from being caught in the throes of misrepresentations of Christian living that are so common in our day.

A general conception, commonly advanced, is that: "Christianity is likened unto one who earnestly desires and diligently seeks salvation, as a result of his efforts, he is rewarded by finding Christ, 'The Pearl of Great Price' He then, forsakes all and follows Him!"

THE OBJECTIONS TO THIS THEORY ARE:

1. The sinner does not "earnestly and diligently seek salvation - the Lord seeks him!"
2. The sinner cannot "sell anything to buy salvation."
   He has nothing to sell and, anyhow, salvation cannot be purchased.
3. This man in the parable "buys the one pearl of great price."
   Can any sinner "buy" Christ?

THE "PEARL OF GREAT PRICE" IS NOT JESUS CHRIST – NOR SALVATION, – FOR NEITHER CAN BE PURCHASED!

Throughout these seven parables the "Man" referred to is Christ Jesus, therefore, it is only logical to conclude that the "Man" in this sixth parable (the Pearl of Great Price) is, also, Jesus Christ, seeing He is the "Man" in all of the other parables!

What did Jesus say this "Pearl of Great Price" is likened unto?
Jesus said, "It is likened unto the kingdom of heaven."

NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1. This "Merchant Man" desire this "pearl of good value."
   As one reads the New Testament, he is made to realize that what Jesus Christ desires more than anything else is to rule and reign in the believer's heart and life. He desires for believers to be submissive to His will and authority! Nothing comes through more clearly than this in the New Testament.

2. This Merchant Man regards this pearl as being of "great price."
   There is not a more staggering thought in all of the Bible than, not only that Jesus desire us, but that we should be of "great price" to Him.

3. This Merchant Man "sold all that He had to gain the great pearl."
   "He sold all that He had," are words that are easily uttered, but our minds are incapable of ever understanding all that they imply. 2 Corinthians 8:9 teaches, "Jesus Christ, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."
4. This Merchant Man "sought the pearl."

No one could ever enlarge upon Peter's teaching in 1 Peter 1:18-19, which states, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."

**LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE "PEARL" ITSELF**

1. The "pearl" was the object of the greatest value to the Merchant Man
2. The pearl is the only gem that is a product of a "living creature."

The kingdom of God is something that is ALIVE within the believer's heart.

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**What a wonderful picture of Christ's kingdom at work within the believer!**

Down in the ocean's depths lives a small animal encased in a shell, we call it an "oyster!" A foreign substance, such as a grain of sand intrudes, causing the oyster to exude a substance called "nacre" and covers whatever it is that causes the wound. The oyster repeats this process again and again, one layer after another of that nacre is cast out by that little oyster, until ultimately there is built up a priceless pearl!

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3. A pearl is a product of "suffering."

The pearl is the answer to the injury that was inflicted upon the oyster. It is the offending particle that ultimately becomes the object of beauty! That which injured the oyster becomes a precious gem!

Acts 14:22, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

4. The pearl is formed "slowly and gradually."

The pearl does not come into existence in a single day. There is a tedious process of waiting while the pearl is being slowly, but surely, formed, and, although, salvation is instant, the process of the formation of the kingdom of God . . . [The reign and rule of Christ Jesus in the believer's life, by the power and grace of God] . . . takes a life time!

5. The pearl has a "lowly origin."

A beautiful pearl, originally had its home in the depths of the sea, amid the mire and filth, because that is where the oyster congregates. The oyster is a scavenger of the ocean.

This lowly origin of the pearl reminds us of our humble beginning, who, but by the grace of God, are by nature creatures of the filth and mire and ruin of Adam's fall (See Ephesians 2:11-12).

6. The pearl is formed "secretly," down in the ocean's depths.
The process of God's kingdom, Christ ruling our hearts, is often unseen by the eye of man, secretly taking place within our life.

7. The pearl is an object selected for honor and exalted future.

That object in the ocean's depths, unseen by the eye of man, is gradually built up until, ultimately it has a position of importance, such as the diadem of a king's crown. It becomes a jewel of royalty, *it was made for this!*

This is what God wants to accomplish, by the power of the Holy Spirit working out the kingdom of heaven, Christ ruling and reigning in every area of the believer's life.

Just as the pearl of "The Pearl of Great Price" had a lowly origin, and ultimately gained a position of dignity, honor and glory, so God will take the believer's character and disposition and work out something beautiful for His glory, if the believer will let Him accomplish this in his life.

8. A pearl is the result of the full attention of the oyster.

The oyster seeks to ease the irritation of the foreign substance by throwing off a secretion which forms over the sore and irritated spot. The oyster becomes weaker and weaker as it puts off this secretion, all of which adds to the formation of the "pearl."

The pearl is made; or perfected, through the lingering, torturous, suffering *death* of the oyster.

What makes the beautiful pearl seem so blue-white, is this layer upon layer which is from the substance put off by the oyster during this process of irritation.

What a beautiful picture of what God is seeking to accomplish in our lives during times of "irritation."

Whenever experiences of difficulty or hardship come into the believer's life, he can respond in one of two ways: (1) he can either re-act in his own self, doing what he thinks is best for him, or, (2) he can submit to Christ's reign in his life and do what God wants done.

Should a grain of sand intrude into the eye, it would bring infection, maybe even the loss of sight, because of the reaction of the human eye. It's very nature is to protect itself, to rid itself of any foreign element that is distasteful or irritating to it. However, should that same grain of sand enter an oyster, instead of rejecting it, the oyster produces a concretion. The oyster does not re-act, but it *acts!* It accepts the irritation! That offending particle ultimately becomes a thing of great beauty - a pearl of great price.

REMEMBER, IT IS NOT THE SOURCE OF IRRITATION THAT PRODUCES THE HARM, BUT THE ACTION, OR RE-ACTION OF THE SUBJECT INVOLVED!
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."

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. No where 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

1. The first parable, "the parable of the sower," reveals the introduction of the kingdom of heaven, that introductory work being the broadcast sowing of the seed of "the word of the kingdom."
2. The second parable, "the parables of the wheat and the tares," shows 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.

5. The fifth parable, "the parable of the hidden treasure," shows "the kingdom of God" as a precious treasure, hidden, to be revealed sometime later.

6. The sixth parable, "the parable of the pearl of great price," we see that "the kingdom of God" is a process Christ Jesus takes the believer through in order to develop worth and potential.

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. In a sense, this seventh parable, "the parable of the fish net," amplifies the other six parables.

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 that 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" - (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 is the fishermen's object, their one aim and design?
". . . and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

True, there were some "bad" fish in the net, however, these fishermen gathered the "good" fish 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 parables is described on the proceeding paragraphs - pages 26-27, and the above on this page

2. THE PROPHETICAL REVELATION
The prophetical revelation is going 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."