

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE PARABLES OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE, THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE THE NET, AND THE HOMEOWNER MATTHEW 13:44-52

- A. Kingdom questions answered by these parables
1. The Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44), What is the most important role in the kingdom?
 2. The Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46), What is the most important role in the kingdom?
 3. The Net (Matthew 13:47-50), How will the kingdom end?
 4. Jesus questions the disciples (Matthew 13:51)
 5. The Homeowner (Matthew 13:52), What is the responsibility of disciples of the kingdom in proclaiming kingdom truth?
- B. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (44), *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*
1. Dwight Pentecost, *The Old Testament made it clear that God chose the nation of Israel to be His theocratic people through whom He would glorify Himself before the world (Ezek. 36:23-38). The question would then arise as to what would be accomplished through the new form of the theocracy.*
 2. The kingdom of heaven is like a hidden treasure in a field.
 - a. It may represent God's plan for the nation of Israel.
 - b. I believe it is broader and deals with God's plan for all of mankind.
 - 1) Genesis 26:4, *I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*
 - 2) I believe this treasure pictures the Church Age in which believers will now take part.
 3. Those who find it sell all they have to buy that field.
 - a. Some believe it refers to salvation.
 - 1) The man sells what he has to obtain entrance into the kingdom.
 - 2) This would make salvation appear to come through the sacrifice and efforts of man instead of the work of God.
 - 3) John 3:5, *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*
 - b. Others believe this refers to Jesus.
 - 1) The field represents the kingdom composed of Jews and Gentiles based on the work of Jesus.
 - 2) Ephesians 2:14-16, *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*
 - c. I believe it refers to believers who accept the challenge of discipleship.
 - 1) The emphasis of these parables seems to be on the disciples and the need to take kingdom work seriously.
 - 2) Philippians 3:7, *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*
- C. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (45-46), *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*
1. The parable emphasizes the same basic point of the Parable of the Hidden Treasure.
 - a. The hidden treasure and the pearl refer to the kingdom of heaven.
 - b. The emphasis is on the importance of what they found - it is worth selling all they had.
 2. The difference is that in the first parable the man found the treasure by accident. Here, precious pearls were being sought by the merchant.
 - a. It could mean that the man represents Gentiles who were far from God but are brought to the kingdom of heaven by Christ.
 - b. The merchant could represent the Jews who were looking for the Messiah and some found that Jesus is He.

- c. R. T. France, *The fact that what the dealer had to sell included presumably other, lesser, pearls might however have led the hearers to reflect on the value of the kingdom of heaven in relation to other competing ideologies; once you have it, you need no other.*

3. It could be that Jesus gave both parables as emphasis to the importance of serving in the kingdom of heaven.

D. The Parable of the Net (47-50)

1. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Every previous form of the theocracy had ended in judgement: the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the catastrophe of the Flood, the scattering from Babel, and the Exile. The question arose then of how this new form of the theocracy would end. The answer was given by Christ in the parable of the net.*
2. Parable (47-48), ***Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. 48 When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad.***
 - a. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a net that gathers all kinds of fish.
 - 1) This parable is similar to the Parable of the Weeds (24-30) with a focus on judgment instead of the composition of the field.
 - 2) The word for *net* only occurs here. Tom Constable, *It describes a large net fishermen drew to shore between two boats. Sometimes they tied one end to the shore and the other end to a boat. Then they would sweep an area of the lake with it, possible a half mile long, drawing as many fish as possible to the shore with it.*
 - b. The fishermen would draw the fish ashore and separated the good fish from the bad.
 - 1) The good fish would be sold but the bad fish would be thrown away.
 - 2) R. T. France, *As long as the fish remain in the lake, and indeed in the net, they remain undifferentiated. It is only when they come up for final scrutiny that some will be preserved and others destroyed.*
3. Explanation of the parable (49-50), ***So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.***
 - a. This fishing scene is compared to the end of the Church Age (note 13:41-42).
 - 1) *When it was full*, this speaks to God's timing as in the Parable of Weeds, that separation takes place in God's timing at the end of the age.
 - 2) Angels will separate the evil from the righteous.
 - 3) J. Dwight Pentecost, *The righteous will be received into the coming millennial theocracy, but the wicked will be excluded. No unsaved person will enter the Lord's millennial kingdom.*
 - 4) The evil (those who have not placed faith in the King) will go to eternal destruction.
 - 5) Mark Bailey, *The fear motive is often condemned by modern Christians, but the Book of Matthew shows Jesus was not opposed to using it properly.*
 - b. Matthew told two more parables about this judgment.
 - 1) The Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13) which emphasizes the need to be ready for the judgment.
 - 2) The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (25:31-46) which gives the basis for the judgment.

E. The importance of understanding parables (51), ***"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes."***

1. Jesus' question concludes His explanation of the parables which began in verse 36.
2. The disciples had asked Jesus to explain the Parable of the Weeds.
3. They said they understood what He told them.
4. Louis Barbieri, *Their yes answer is surprising, for they could not have known the full implications of these parables. In fact the disciples' subsequent questions and actions proved that they did not really comprehend the parables.*
5. R. T. France, *Matthew's disciples are far from perfect, but they are now firmly on the road to understanding, and Jesus' response apparently accepts their claim without irony.*

- F. The Parable of the Homeowner (52), *And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."*
1. Dwight Pentecost, *After Christ revealed the new form of the kingdom through parables, His hearers might well have asked what their responsibility was in the light of this truth that had been communicated. The Lord's answer was the parable of the owner of the house.*
 2. *scribe*
 - a. R. T. France, ...the saying envisages disciples in their *scribal* function, that is as authorized teachers for the kingdom of heaven, in contrast with the Pharisaic scribes who have failed to grasp its message.
 - b. The scribes of Israel could only teach what is old because they had not discovered the new secrets of the kingdom.
 3. Scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven can teach what is new and old.
 - a. Old truths
 - 1) The kingdom will be ruled by the Messiah.
 - 2) The kingdom will consist of righteousness.
 - 3) The kingdom will be comprised of the people of Israel.
 - b. New truths
 - 1) The Messiah would be rejected when He offered the kingdom.
 - 2) The kingdom will include the unrighteous, for a time.
 - 3) The kingdom will include Gentiles.
 - c. These new truths are things hidden from the foundation of the world (13:35), *This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."*
 - 1) The disciples are coming to the position where they have new truth for the household of God.
 - 2) This parable challenges them to bring it out for the benefit of others.

CONCLUSION

Louis Barbieri, *In these seven parables He presented some truths they were well aware of and others that were new to them. They knew about a kingdom over which Messiah would rule and reign, but they did not know it would be rejected at the time it was offered. They knew the kingdom would include righteousness, but they did not know it would also include evil. Jesus pointed up a new truth that the period between His rejection and His second coming would be characterized by professing followers, both good and evil. This era would have a small beginning, but it would grow into a great "kingdom" of professors. Once this process began, it could not be stopped, and within it God is maintaining His people Israel and creating His church. This inter-advent period will end with a time of judgment in which God will separate the wicked from the righteous and the righteous will then enter the earthly kingdom to rule and reign with Christ. Through these parables Jesus answered the question, What happened to the kingdom? The answer: God's kingdom will be established on earth at Jesus' second coming; meanwhile good and evil coexist.*