

Because of Their Unbelief

Matthew 13:44 – 14:1

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~ Our last report concluded with the harshest words the Lord Jesus Christ ever spoke. We certainly aren't going to make any departure from His interpretation of these parables; which He Personally gave us. If you haven't read our last report, then I highly suggest you go back and do so now. If you're not a regular reader of this so-called Spiritual Safari then I suggest you go all the way back and start at the very beginning. We have too many people today who want to start reading the Bible in some very peculiar places; usually the back. They never seem to go all the way through in a systematic, sincere, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led learning exercise of Holy Writ. They're always sensational and seriously confused. So, why not try a real, educated Bible study with us? Our safari brings us to three very unusual parables that all deal with different aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven as it is today – right now....

XIII

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto 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.

~ Let's stop in this field for just a moment because we already know the "field" is the world. The Lord Jesus Himself told us that. There is an age-old interpretation that this is a sinner buying the Gospel. We know that cannot be accurate because the Gospel is not hid in a field. The hidden treasure is the nation Israel, and the field is the world. Israel today is certainly hidden, buried, actually, in the world. They're a nation today, sure – but they're having a supreme and almighty struggle remaining so. Israel will NEVER enjoy peace and rest in that land until they get it from the Lord Jesus Christ; and that just hasn't happened today – because Israel rejects Him as the True and Living God!

There was once a picture in a newspaper of an Israeli convention with many prominent Jewish scientists and above the platform of speakers was a huge sign in Hebrew and in English that read, "Science Will Give Us Peace in Israel" – that was some seventy-five years ago, friends. May I say, the Prince of Peace is the only One Who is capable of giving peace to Israel today! The largest population of Israelites is in New York City, California and South Florida – not Israel. Let's be real and face facts, my beloved; Israel is presently scattered abroad and throughout the world and has no peace whatsoever. The Arab controls Jerusalem.

God is definitely not finished dealing with the nation Israel, though. Paul wrote in Romans, "....I say then, hath God cast away His people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin." God has not cast away His people which He foreknew. Paul, apparently, didn't believe the Lord was through with Israel. Zechariah also makes it abundantly clear in the twelfth chapter of his prophecy at verse ten that there is a day coming in the future when He leads His own back to Him. Jeremiah speaks of God gathering Israel from the east and the north and the south and the west. That means east and north and south and west of the nation Israel, by the way – not some other place. Well, that day has not come yet; when that day does come they won't even continue to observe the single oldest holiday known to mankind: the Passover! Anyone who thinks God is through with the nation Israel is not seeing the Word of God clearly. How does God redeem Israel? – He bought them with His Blood, friends. It's all right here in the Bible just as plain as daylight. God will redeem Israel the same way He redeemed you and me. The fountain will be opened in the house of David...

45 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.

~ Allow me to indulge to you the popular interpretation of this parable today; one I do not accept: many people say the sinner is the merchant man and that the pearl of great price is Christ, and the sinner goes and sells

all that he has and he buys Christ that way; and that certainly is simple enough for most simpletons. They leave it at that without question or second thought. There's even a hymn that says "...I have found the pearl of greatest price – my heart does sing for joy – and sing I must – for Christ is mine now – Christ shall my song employ" ~ Well, the reason we won't accept that interpretation and must dismiss it as unworthy of thoughtful consideration is because people aren't looking for Christ today. The Bible says people are not looking for God and I have found in real life that people just aren't looking to catch up with Christ. They're not even looking for salvation, friends - not at all. Further, and most importantly, the merchantman cannot be the sinner because the sinner has nothing to pay for his salvation. Mankind is simply not seeking Christ today because, when they find Him, He exposes the depraved level of spiritual beggars we are. Christ's offer is free as He tells us to come and buy without money. Whosoever thirsts can come to the Living Waters and drink freely. This man sells all that he has – but we don't have anything to sell because we are already dead in trespasses and sins before we are redeemed.

God so loved....that He GAVE His Son. The GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ. The merchantman in this parable is Christ. Christ left His home and came to this earth from Heaven to find a pearl of great price. What He found were a bunch of lost sinners. So, Christ died for them and shed His blood – that's called selling all that you have, my friends. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes, He became poor that we, through His poverty, might be made rich! That's how we are redeemed to God – HE bought US! We need to inspect this in our lives very carefully as we attempt to examine the pearl very closely. A pearl is not a stone like a diamond or a ruby. A pearl is formed by a living organism. That little sea creature gets a grain of foreign matter that intrudes into the shell. The spec of sand hurts and harms it. So, the oyster sends out a secretion that covers over and over until the beautiful white pearl is formed. It's not an emerald or a sapphire and we don't cut pearls like we do stones. Interestingly, the pearl was not considered valuable to the Israelites. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Job verses fourteen to nineteen, pearls and coral are classified together – as in, no real value; they certainly were not a luxury item. There are other pearly passages you may want to find in connection with this. However, pearls WERE – and are - very valuable to the Gentiles.

I'm sure the apostles were a little confused about that parable and the mention of goodly pearls. The oriental had given a symbolic meaning to the pearl; that of innocence and purity - and had deemed them fit for only kings and potentates. Now, with that information we can see that Christ is positively identified as the merchantman Who saw man in sin. Sin had intruded upon man, so He took man's sin and He bore it. He was made sin for us. We get into the heart of Christ through a spear wound, my beloved. Don't kid yourself. Christ was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. We cannot imagine.

So, how does Christ respond? – He puts around us the white robe of righteousness and He formed the church. The pearl is the response of the organism; your sin – and mine – is the foreign matter and HE makes us white as snow. Impurity made pure; we are His workmanship, and we are created in Christ Jesus. God saw what He could make out of us and not what we were. Christ sees His church as she will be someday; presented to Him without spot or blemish. Christ sold all that He had that He might gain the church. Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be but when He shall appear we shall be like him. When we get to Revelation we're going to find some gates in the New Jerusalem – and guess what they're made out of? This is no accident we're looking at. This makes the church one living body presented to Him and it's also a precious jewel! ~

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the age: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

~ Again, I have changed the word "world" to "age" because the Bible does not teach the end of the world. Time will be no more when eternity begins but I can't tell the difference. I've never met anyone that could tell the

difference. Either way – there’s no end to it. The word in the Greek is “ion” – and that means it is a time related word. The end of this age is when Christ comes to establish His Kingdom. The Lord here makes it clear that it’s a terrible thing to be lost at WHATEVER time you come up with for that period....

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

~ There was a very interesting scientific paper produced by men presenting certain evidence in several different fields. One was theorizing exactly what the atom blast from a bomb would do because they weren’t too sure at that time. They also weren’t sure of the effects of germ warfare and many different things. One scientist is quoted as saying, “...this is all much like eternity. You may not know if there is a Heaven or a hell but you better be sure that you’re going to Heaven; because even if you happen to be wrong – you’ll be right – and, if you’re wrong, it’s going to be so much worse.” Jesus makes it clear it will be bad – very bad. Men think they are so sophisticated today when they deny the existence of hell. If they were honest they would admit they know nothing about it as presented in the Word of God. Of course, they will say you don’t know, either; but we DO know what’s in the Bible. Since the Bible has been so completely correct and accurate in my own life I’m going to believe it is accurate about my eternity in death! I mean, when they tell us a hurricane is coming I take cover. The sun is always shining in the calm before a hurricane, too, by the way. The weather is gorgeous until it’s too late to prepare....

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

~ Some people call verse fifty-two another parable. It could be. This so-called Spiritual Safari is so personal that the Lord made it my business writing these reports. I’ll be honest with you dear readers because I always

am honest with you, I'm not interested in the world's business or their commerce or their way of life, in general, at all. In this safari I just bring forth things both new and old. Many of you have heard much of what I teach before. I know you have, but that has nothing to do with me. I do hope we're getting some new things somewhere along the line, though? I think this is what we are called to do today....

53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

~ Nobody ever questioned the miracles being performed and I want to make that clear. What they did question was: HOW did He do them? To the Pharisee Jesus was just the son of a common laborer. That's all Jesus is to many people today, too. The age old question still remains today: "Who do men say that I am?" asks Jesus. Well, the Pharisees are now asking....

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

~ Jesus has half-brothers and sisters, but they did not understand Him. They were deeply offended by Him and were ashamed of being associated with Him and the apostles. This is what deceives many people today; we don't get too familiar with the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people thought they were familiar with Jesus in His day....

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

~ The only thing that limited the power of God while He was on earth was....unbelief. The problem is never that Jesus isn't able to do something – the problem is that we don't believe He can or will. That is the problem with both you and me – and the very best of saints. We must believe He can and will reward our obedience by answering our prayers the way we pray them. Christ is limited ONLY by unbelief. What marvelous truths we have here....

XIV

1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

~ So, we reach the fourteenth chapter as we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God; and we can see hostility and antagonism building rapidly as they continue to reject Jesus as King. The conflict with the religious rulers will escalate into full-blown crises now. We're going to see John the Baptist murdered as Herod attempts to snuff the light out of the world. Ultimately they must lay their wicked hands on the Lord Jesus. Jesus withdraws at this time because His hour had not yet come. Read this entire chapter. Herod is just a tad superstitious, as you can tell; but the superstition of Herod is the superstition of a wholly ignorant and, candidly, a stupid man. His ignorance lives on today in men and women who are completely ignorant and, yes, just plain dumb. The ministry of the Lord Jesus could not escape the notice of the man in power. Herod just wasn't sure how to commission it for his benefit. I have said this before, I believe Herod formed the mafia and the original members of the Cosa Nostra were his family! I could be wrong. What I do know is that this man has a bad conscience and he's alarmingly dim – which is worse than being just one or the other. Herod put John in prison to shut him up - because he was disturbed - by what was being said ~

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