

## Chapter XIV

### The Flesh and the Spirit in the Church Age

#### THE PARABLES OF THE TREASURE HID IN THE FIELD AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

After completing the parable of the leaven, our Lord sent the multitude away and went into the house. There the disciples asked the interpretation of the parable of the tares and wheat, which our Lord readily supplied. The Lord then spoke three more parables to his disciples, which were meant for the ears of believers and not for the multitude. The first of these was the parable of the treasure hid in a field. Our Lord said: *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* (Matthew 13:44).

Once again the understanding of this parable is dependent upon the parables that have preceded it. The field is the world. The man who found the treasure in the field is the Lord. There is only one new thing in this parable. It is the treasure, and the treasure is Israel. This corresponds to Biblical history. Seventy souls of the lineage of Jacob went into Egypt where,

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under the rule of Joseph, they were in favor with the Egyptians and grew into a great nation. This nation was named for Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel. After some time in Egypt, Israel came into bondage to the Egyptians by a pharaoh who knew not Joseph.

Four hundred and thirty years earlier, God had promised Abraham, *thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs*. As the plan unfolded, God promised to redeem Israel out of Egypt by the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, which was a portrayal of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Both prophetically and typically, the redemption of Israel out of Egypt represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. This, in turn, corresponds to the man in the parable of the hid treasure, who sold all that he had to purchase the field. The Lord purchased the field to obtain the treasure. This not only provided redemption for the elect of Israel, but also for the elect out of the nations of this world by the one sacrifice for sins forever.

Despite God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, Israel immediately put herself under bondage through the Mosaic law. This law was not made to provide for Israel's self-justification before God, but rather her condemnation, which would reveal her absolute need of salvation in Jesus Christ. While pledging her allegiance to Jehovah, she became enslaved to the idolatry of the nations round about her, which necessitated her judgment. The northern ten tribes of Israel were carried into Assyrian bondage; and less than two hundred years later, the tribes of Benjamin and Judah were carried away to Babylon.

After spending seventy years in captivity, less than fifty thousand Jews returned to the land to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the temple. These continued to the time of Herod the Great, who made a covenant with Israel to completely rebuild Zerubbabel's temple. It was during the

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time of the rebuilding of this temple that our Lord came in His first advent to be born of a virgin; to fulfill every jot and tittle of the law; to die a vicarious sacrifice for sin; to be raised from the dead after three days and three nights; to ascend into heaven to be the believer's eternal High Priest and intercessor. The apostle John declared this, when he wrote:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:10-14)

While this portion of Scripture speaks of the fact that the majority in the nation of Israel did not receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, this could not dissuade Him from His ministry to fulfill all righteousness and every jot and tittle of the law, and then to willingly offer Himself as a ransom for the sins of the whole world.

At the coming of our Lord to perform His predestined ministry in behalf of Israel and the world, He was openly rejected by the religious leaders in Israel. They, in turn, persuaded the majority of the people to reject Him. In the rejection of our Lord, the Jews cried, *His blood be on us, and on our children*. This self-inflicted curse fell upon the nation almost immediately in the destruction of Jerusalem and in their many persecutions throughout the years when they were scattered among the Gentile nations of the world.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. caused Israel to be re-hidden in the field. In this judgment, the Jews were dispersed among the nations, where they have been hidden all of these years. In fulfillment of numerous prophetic statements in Scripture, on May 14, 1948, Israel became a nation again. Thus the treasure hid in the field has reemerged to announce the soon

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return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. Israel's reemergence as a nation proves God has not cast away His people, whom He foreknew. *The man* purchased the field to obtain the treasure.

Therefore a remnant in Israel shall be saved. The apostle Paul wrote:

... 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. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of [Elijah]? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them [Israel] to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? (Romans 11:1-12)

God has had a remnant of genuine believers in every age who have accepted the truth of the gospel. The treasure hid in the field is the remnant out of Israel. God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that all of the families of the earth would be blessed through *their seed*. Jesus Christ is that *Seed*. Thus Jesus is the only man who could sell all that he had and purchase the field. When Jesus bought the field to obtain the treasure, He also provided for the salvation of the world. Thus all of the families of the earth are blessed by the purchase of the field. This leads us to the sixth parable in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. This parable is the parable of a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. Our Lord said: *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*

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*and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matthew 13:45-46).*

The merchant man corresponds to the man in the previous parables. His identification is further corroborated by the price he paid for the pearl. The merchant man sold all that he had to purchase the one pearl of great price. The price that was paid for the pearl is the same price that was paid for the field, which contained the treasure. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary paid for the treasure hid in the field, and it paid for the pearl of great price.

The new thing in this parable is the pearl. Pearls are formed in the sea. The pearl represents something of great value, which is drawn from the sea. Since the sea represents the Gentile nations of the world in Scripture, the pearl of great price represents the redeemed out of the nations of the world, both Jews and Gentiles. This is true because the church (God's called-out assembly) is the one thing of great value, which is drawn from the Gentile nations of the world by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

The treasure hid in the field awaits its redemption at the end of the age, when they will look on Him, Whom they pierced. Even so, at the present time, both Jews and Gentiles are being saved through the world-wide ministry of the church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female, bond or free. The apostle Paul wrote:

... God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

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that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of [the] promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain [Jew and Gentile] one new man [His called-out assembly], so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body [His called-out assembly] by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off [the Gentile], and to them that were nigh [the Jew]. For through him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints [Old Testament saints], and of the household of God [New Testament saints]; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles [New Testament saints] and prophets [Old Testament saints], Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:4-22)

Thus the church, the pearl of great price, is a homogenous body of believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who have become one body by faith in Jesus Christ. The church is the only place where Jews and Gentiles have an opportunity to serve the Lord in this present age. Judaism has been abandoned because of its apostasy. The treasure has been re-hidden in the field. The treasure will reemerge to be the witness to the truth during the tribulation period; but at the present time God is operating through the pearl of great price until the time of the first resurrection. Once this age is complete, the term church (*ekklesia*: a called-out assembly) will take on its larger meaning and will emerge as the bride of Christ, which according to Revelation 21:27 will be *they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*. Thus the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price will merge into the one body of Christ, which is His bride, at the end of the age.