

Lesson 6. Pearl of Great Price, Matt 13:45–46, Gentile Believers Come out of the Sea; the Pearl Is Living Matter as Opposed to Minerals; Pearls Are Developed by Oysters, Clams & Snails by “Accretion (Addition),” a Picture of the Growing Church; The Good & Bad Fish, Matt 13:47–50: Depicts the Baptisms of Fire; Synopsis of the Parables; Conclusion

I. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price: Matthew 13:45-46.

Matthew 13:45 - “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,

v. 46 - and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

1. This parable is also about a treasure but this one comes out of the sea.
2. Figurative language in the Bible is helpful in interpreting this parable.
3. In the previous parable the hidden treasure was discovered buried in the field. The interpretation revealed that the field, which is the world, contained a treasure that was discovered by a Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Man, the Lord in His true humanity, sacrificed all that He had in order to purchase this treasure.
4. In figurative language, Jews come out of the “land” and Gentiles come out of the “sea.” The “hidden treasure,” again, are the Jews disbursed throughout the world and regathered by Christ at the Second Advent.
5. Here we see a treasure that is from the sea and therefore refers to Gentiles generally and to the Church specifically.
6. In the parable of the pearl of great price we find an expert on pearls called a merchant. This Merchant is God the Father.
7. To understand the qualities that the Father sought when buying pearls we need to learn something about pearls.

A dense variously colored and usually lustrous concentration formed of concentric layers of mother-of-pearl as an abnormal growth within the shell of some mollusks, such as clams, abalone, and oysters.¹

¹ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “pearl.”



- 1) Mother-of-pearl is the substance which makes up the shell of the mollusk. Its shell-secreting cells are located within the inner mantle.
- 2) When a foreign substance penetrates the mantle, the cells attach to the particle and build up more or less concentric layers of pearl around it.
- 3) The pearl that develops is either spherical or drop-like.
8. Note that what initiates the development of the pearl is the intrusion of an alien body into the mollusk's shell.
9. This foreign substance is considered an irritation to the mollusk causing it both pain and suffering.
10. The more the mollusk fights the foreign substance the larger and more beautiful becomes the pearl.
11. The pearl is considered by the mollusk to be a source of discomfort that must be neutralized.
12. The mollusk is considered by the pearl to be a source of constant attack.
13. In the end, it is the pearl that emerges as the vessel of honor in this conflict. The mollusk is ugly and misshapen while the pearl endures to become a thing of beauty and perfection.

Romans 9:21 - Does not the Potter [**God**] possess authority over the clay [**mankind**], from the same lump to make on the one hand a vessel for the purpose of honor and on the other hand another vessel for the purpose of dishonor? Of course, He does.

14. The more the mollusk seeks to eliminate the alien substance, the larger the pearl grows, gradually becoming more and more precious.
15. In the end an expert Gemologist will discover this perfect pearl and sell all that he has to buy it.
16. Whereas the "treasure" of the previous parable emphasized the Jewish Diaspora scattered throughout the "field" of the world, the pearl from the sea in this parable emphasizes the mystery of the Church during the times of the Gentiles.
17. Our Lord makes reference here then to the mystery of the Church as a part of the "kingdom of heaven."

18. As the Church confronts pressure and resistance from its hostile hosts in the devil's world, it uses this adversity to grow and achieve perfections.
19. Principle: Adversity is inevitable; stress is optional. *Crescit sub pondere virtus*: virtue increases under oppression.
20. The expert Gemologist, God the Father, paid everything He had to purchase this pearl of great price.

1 Corinthians 6:20a - You have been bought with a price.

1 Corinthians 7:23a - You were bought with a price.

The "price" paid by the Father was the substitutionary, sacrificial, spiritual death of His uniquely-born Son on the cross and the thing purchased was our so great salvation.

21. Jesus Christ will collect the pearl at the rapture, harvesting it from the world and delivering it from Satan's unrelenting assault upon it.
22. The pearl was considered in the past and still is by gemologists as the most precious of all gems.
23. Actually the pearl is not an authentic gemstone. It is different. Although pearls are classified with other precious stones, true gems find their origin within the chemicals of the earth; the pearl, on the other hand, is the product of living matter.
24. Another member of the mollusk phylum is the slug, thus slugs, oysters, and clams are cousins.
25. Therefore, the pearl, if you will permit me to say so, is slug slime which has been converted into a marvelous gem considered to be the most precious of all.
26. The pearl of great price is unique among all the precious stones. As pearls garnish the attire of earthly royal families, the pearl of great price *is* the royal family of God.
27. Once this perfect pearl is completed, the divine Gemologist, or Father in heaven, will call her home.
28. Thus, the "kingdom" is not the Church but the Church is part of the "kingdom of heaven."



29. It develops within the sea of Gentile nations where the pressures of *cosmos diabolicus* are constantly attempting to neutralize its presence.
30. Under this incessant and continual pressure, the church grows, enduring the assaults of the unbelieving cosmos and converting it into the most valuable of all gems: the pearl of great price.
31. Dr. Cyrus I. Scofield sums up the parable very eloquently in his *New Scofield Study Bible*, with his footnote at Matthew 13:45, where he writes:

A pearl is an illustration of the Church ... formed by accretion and that not mechanically but vitally, as Christ adds to the Church.
32. “Accretion” means “the process of growth by a gradual buildup.” This growth is not accomplished through some mechanical process but “vitally,” which means, it is the result of the accumulation of living matter.
33. Thus, the pearl of great price emphasizes the buildup of the Church in the mystery period of the Church Age.
34. The treasure emphasizes Israel as part of the “kingdom” in the Church Age and Tribulation during which dispensations she is “hidden,” a reference to Jews being globally disbursed.
35. The Pearl emphasizes the Church and its completion at the rapture.
36. Both the treasure of Israel and the pearl of the Church are part of the “kingdom of heaven.”

J. The Parable of the Good and Bad Fish: Matthew 13:47-50.

Matthew 13:47 - “Again, the kingdom is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering *fish* of every kind;

v. 48 - and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away.

v. 49 - “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,



Matthew 13:50 - and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

1. This parable is a parallel to the one about the wheat and the tares. Both teach that at the Second Advent, angels will separate true members of the “kingdom of heaven” from the impostors and wannabes.
2. In the parable of the wheat and tares, the metaphor focused on good seed, believers, which were portrayed as wheat, being forced to share the field with tares, unbelievers, who although they looked like wheat, were not.
3. At the harvest, the angels are said to separate the tares from the wheat, with the former going into the fire of Torments and the latter entering the millennial reign of Christ.
4. The “field” represents the world but also indicates that the emphasis is on Jewish members of the “kingdom of heaven” between the advents of Christ.
5. The parable of the good and bad fish emphasizes the Gentile members of the “kingdom of heaven” in the Tribulation.
6. At the Second Advent the angels will separate the Gentiles of the Tribulation into two groups: (1) good fish (believers) and (2) bad fish (unbelievers).
7. That Gentiles are in view is obvious from the fact that the fish are all gathered from the sea.
8. “Fish of every kind” is not quite an accurate translation of what is found in verses 47 and 48. The Greek word “fish,” **ἰχθύς (*ichthús*)** is not found in this passage, consequently in the English Bibles the word “fish” is printed in italic. Nevertheless, fish are implied in the context.
9. It can be assumed that the catch is predominantly fish but the fishermen—also not stated in context but implied—never know what’s going to come up in their net.
10. Fishermen hope their net will come up full of good, marketable fish, but they know from experience that they will have to do some sorting.

11. The implication is that at the Second Advent the “kingdom of heaven” is going to contain good fish—believers, but they will be accompanied by bad fish—unbelievers.
12. “Every kind” indicates that both categories will be populated by members of every language, nationality, and race.
13. The Gentile unbelievers—the bad fish—will be cast into the furnace while the Gentile believers—the good fish—will be allowed to enter the millennial reign.
14. The word for “bad” is **σαπρός (*sapρός*)** and it has two meanings:
 - 1) Corrupt, worthless, of poor quality
 - 2) Rotten, putrid
15. These sea creatures have just been caught so they are not hauled upon the shore physically rotten and putrid.
16. However, this is an excellent description of their souls. The unbeliever’s soul is rotten from a lifetime of poor dieting.
17. Cosmic didactics have fed the soul a constant diet of lies and deception so that it has resulted in a lifestyle of human good, evil, and corruption.
18. A rotten soul produces a corrupt and worthless life.
19. The angels will note that the soul is negative toward the Messiah/Savior and thus not a part of the true “kingdom of heaven.”
20. Such fish will be thrown in the furnace and burned in the fire of Torments.
- 22- What we see here is again, a parallel to the parable of the wheat and the tares. That parable is prophetic of the baptism of fire for Jews at the Second Advent.
23. The baptism of fire for the Jews is prophesied in Ezekiel 20:33–38 and referenced in the parables of our Lord found in Matthew 25:1–30.
24. The parable of the good and bad fish is prophetic of the baptism of fire for Gentiles at the Second Advent, referred to by the Lord in Matthew 25:31–46.



25. We learned in Matthew 13:30 that the tares—Jewish unbelievers—and in Matthew 13:50 that the bad fish—Gentile unbelievers—will be burned in Torments. In both cases the Lord informs us “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

K. Synopsis of the Parables of Matthew 13.

1. **Sowing Soil**: The word of truth is available to all but only the positive believer can maximize its impact in his life. Others are distracted by the lie while still others believe the lie.
2. **The Tares & the Wheat**: *Cosmos diabolicus* is characterized by the presence of evil men presenting themselves as ministers of righteousness, communicating the lie behind a rhetorical veil of as much truth as the hidden agenda can permit. Knowledge of doctrine allows the “wheat” to grow and produce fruit in the “midst of a crooked and perverse generation.” (Philippians 2:15b) The tares, Jewish unbelievers, will be cast into Torments and the wheat, Jewish believers, will enter the millennial reign of Christ. This is the baptism of fire for the Jews at the Second Advent.
3. **The Mustard Seed**: The “kingdom of heaven” grows exponentially from the smallest of beginnings toward a body of untold numbers.
4. **The Leaven**: The “kingdom of heaven” is under constant assault from religion which seeks to permeate it with the lie and neutralize the impact of truth.
5. **The Hidden Treasure**: Jesus Christ knows His people Israel that are dispersed throughout the field of the world. He has sacrificed all that He has on their behalf so He can claim them as His own at the Second Advent.
6. **The Pearl of Great Price**: The word of truth enables Church Age believers to endure attacks from the devil’s world so that, through accretion, the universal Church grows and becomes a valuable gem in the eyes of God. Jesus Christ will deliver this perfect pearl to God the Father at the rapture.



7. **The Good & Bad Fish:** The bad fish, Gentile unbelievers, will be separated from the good fish, Gentile believers, at the baptism of fire for Gentiles at the Second Advent. Gentile unbelievers will be cast into Torments while Gentile believers will enter into the millennial reign of Christ.

L. Conclusion.

1. The millennium is the public presentation of the “kingdom of heaven.” It will no longer be a mystery but an historical reality. This is when the “kingdom of heaven” merges with the “kingdom of God.”
2. Those who make up the kingdom of heaven enter into its citizenship by positive volition toward divine didactics.
3. Those who make up the groups who are cast into Torments are such because they chose to believe the lie taught by cosmic didactics.
4. Church Age believers will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ based on their submission to the teachings of grace didactics after salvation.
5. The Church Age believer’s rewards include the crown awards, mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:8 (righteousness), James 1:12 (life), and 1 Peter 5:4 (glory), as well as the Nike Awards assigned to the “winners” in Revelation 2–3.
6. Jewish and Gentile believers in the Tribulation will be rewarded in the millennium based on their submission to the teachings of divine didactics after salvation.
7. These believer’s rewards are illustrated by a large harvest in Matthew 13:8, 23, and by delegation of authority over cities in Luke 19:17, 19.
8. Entry into the “kingdom of heaven” and attainment of rewards is under constant assault by the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics.
9. The insurgents leading this assault are illustrated in the parables by: the evil birds, rocky places, the sun, thorns, tares, leaven, and the bad fish.



10. We should therefore be more motivated to remain in the Divine Academy of Grace Didactics so that we are not neutralized by the lie and its insidious facades.
11. We should also be more motivated to rescue the unbeliever out from the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics through personal evangelism.
12. Unless these unfortunates hear and respond to Gospel truth, we know from our Lord in Matthew 13:42, 50 that the angels:
Matthew 13:42 - "... will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
13. We are also wise to remember our Lord's words in Matthew 13:9, 43, where He says, "He who has ears, let him hear."
14. And now I bring your attention to the last verse we will note in Matthew 13 and ask you to decide in your own soul how you would answer it if the Lord addressed it to you.
Matthew 13:51 - "Have you understood all these things?" The disciples said to Him, "Yes."

(End Shreveport Bible Conference. Six lessons: 7, 8, & 9 June 2000.)