

## Questions

Question: Who is the pearl of great price in *Matthew 13*?

Although many people teach that the pearl of great price is the church (body of Christ), it clearly is not. There are several things most people do not take into consideration that we will look at and consider here.

A) Before Israel was created there were only the Gentile nations and Israel was created from one man, Jacob, Abraham's grandson, who was a Gentile. Before this there were only Gentiles who worshipped God, built alters to Him, made sacrifices to Him and God accepted their worship (*Romans 2:14*). Scripture states that they were "a law for themselves..." and God accepted and judged them accordingly all the way to the cross. Remember Cain and Able.

B) At the time Jesus was speaking, there was no body of Christ because He had not died and been raised and the Holy Spirit had not been poured out. He was born a Jew under the law and spoke to and taught people (Israel) under that law and covenant. In *Matthew 10:5-7* (read more for context) Jesus sends His disciples out with the Gospel of the Kingdom and told them that they were not to go to the Gentiles but **only** to the "lost sheep of Israel." When speaking to the Canaanite woman in *Matthew 15:24* Jesus stated, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" but demonstrates, through this woman's faith, that God always accepts faith in Him wherever He finds it because He also accepted the Gentile's worship.

C) The parables, as well as all teaching of Jesus, were given to a people under a covenant of law which was a righteousness for them if they kept it completely (see the Salvation and Kingdom studies in the toolbox for further details) and He taught them things about the law that they should have already understood, but they didn't because they pursued it by works, not by faith (see *Romans 9:32* but read *chapters 9-11* for context). All of His teaching was directed to Israel's acceptance or rejection of God's Word to them in relation to entrance (salvation for them) or denial of entrance (eternal punishment) into the kingdom.

D) After telling these parables in *Matthew 13* notice *verse 51* which states, "Have you understood all these things? Jesus asked. Yes they replied." Ask yourself a question: what was it they understood? If Jesus, born a Jew under the law, was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, addressed them with a message - "repent for the kingdom of heaven is near/at hand" and taught Israel about the law and entrance into this kingdom that is now at hand; how is it that He was addressing the church/body of Christ since Israel knew nothing about it from their prophets and it had not yet been established? The answer is: there is no possible way they could have understood anything He told them except those things foretold by the prophets, things of the law and the promised kingdom. The body of Christ was "a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began" (*1 Corinthians 2:7*). Israel knew nothing about a time when Gentiles would be on a level playing field as them. So why would Jesus teach them about it? He wouldn't and didn't; He would only prepare them for what they could understand - the law and the kingdom, as He came to them first with an offer to establish their "heaven" on earth. The law and the kingdom is what they understood, not the body of Christ where there is "neither Jew nor Gentile," a heavenly body of God's children.

E) The Holy Spirit was not poured out until 50 days after the crucifixion (*Acts 2*) and the old covenant of law was nailed to the cross (*Colossians 2:13-15*) and a new covenant is now established (*1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6*). This is the time when the body of Christ is to be gathered, not before the cross.

Other things to be considered: as a member of the body of Christ we were/are **born into** the kingdom where "...He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves" (*Colossians 1:13*), that is presently in heaven where Christ is. "...by grace you have been saved through faith..." (read *Ephesians 2:4-10*) and "...our citizenship is in heaven" (*Philippians 3:20*) and we are not at the judgments of *Matthew 25* for entrance into the kingdom. Our sin was judged at the cross when we put our faith in Christ; we were born again (into the kingdom), received the gift of the Holy Spirit, a guarantee of eternal life and the forgiveness of sin (*Ephesians 1:7-13*) and will co-reign with Christ (see *1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12*).

With all these things considered it should not be hard to conclude that the pearl of great price is the Gentile nations and the treasure being Israel, the only two groups of people in existence at that time. It is interesting how the Gentiles are nearly always left out of the picture, when, at the judgments of *Matthew 25* in *verses 31-46* we see the Gentile nations judged by how they treated Israel during the seven years of the tribulation and then their entrance or eternal punishment. This again is not the body of Christ - CONTEXT! Notice what Jesus says in *Matthew 25:34* "...Come, you who are blessed by my Father; **take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world**" and to whom is He speaking? In *verse 32*: "**all the nations.**" The body is never referred to as a nation. There is much more evidence presented in the Scriptures and it would take a great deal of time to show it

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all in writing but this should be enough to point you in the right direction. We pray this helps as we all grow in Christ together.