

Matthew 13:44-46

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- [0 : 0 0] This morning we're still in Matthew 13. It's taking us a long time to do Matthew 13, for which I make no apology whatsoever, because God put very rich pickings in there.
- By way of introduction, you will recall that in Matthew 12, this series of events happens which represents a turning point in the ministry of Jesus.
- That it's the point at which the religious rulers of Israel finally and completely and officially rejected Jesus as their Messiah and decided they would try to kill him.
- And it was the point at which Jesus said to them, and this is my quotation, this is not verbatim, read it for yourself by all means, but you lot have just committed the unforgivable sin, you will not be forgiven for this.
- And from that moment on, Israel was sidelined. And I've explained before, I'm not a replacement theologian. God has not finished with Israel yet.
- [1 : 0 8] Israel still has a part to play in the plan of God. But that represents, if you like, the beginning of the church age. The church age began when Israel was no longer of use to God for the distribution of his word in the world.
- And so there was a cutoff point where he said to them, you will see no more signs. You will only see one more sign. That's the sign of the resurrection, the sign of Jonah.
- But other than that, I'm not doing any more signs for you. Up to this point, he had made a point of doing many signs, all of which confirmed that he was Messiah.
- And the point at which they rejected him, he had done a particular sign, the healing or the rather the deliverance of a man with a dumb spirit, that was recognised by the Pharisees as a messianic sign.
- So they had been teaching, if a man shows up and does this sign, that's Messiah. And he turned up and he did it. And they said, oh, no, no, he's acting under the power of Satan.
- [2 : 1 3] So they were utterly hypocritical. And they rejected him and decided they would kill him at that point. And so this turning point brought about the fact that he would, from then on, teach in parables for the express purpose of hiding some things from the unbelieving Jews and at the same time revealing it to the believers.
- And you recall in the first parable, the parable of the sower, he provided an explanation of that parable. So the crowds were there. They heard the parable.
- They all went away scratching their heads. But the believers followed Jesus and asked him for an explanation. And they got one. And then similarly with the parable of the wheat and the tares, that he delivered that parable and they all went away.
- But believers then pursued him and said, can you explain it to us? And he did. And we've already dealt with the parable of the leaven and the parable of the mustard seed.
- And if you haven't heard those, I suggest you get the recordings because they do reveal a lot of stuff that is often taught wrongly and doesn't delve into the Old Testament to find the right answers to these parables.

[3 : 37] And so we're now going to continue through these parables that are labelled the parables of the kingdom. And they're labelled that because they say at the start of the parables, certainly the latter six, they all say the kingdom of God is like.

And they then provide a simile as to what the kingdom of God is like. But it's done in a parabolic form.

So when you first read it, you think, hang on, the kingdom of God is like a tree that grows, you know, a mustard seed that grows into a tree and houses the birds.

And you do need to dig into the Old Testament and draw on God's word to understand it. Well, today we're looking at two parables. I consider I'm doing really well to do two in one hit.

That's if I get through them. And these are the parables of the hidden treasure, verse 44, Matthew 13, verse 44, and the parable of the costly pearl, verses 45 and 46.

[4 : 47] So we're going to cover a massive three verses today. And these are two other parables where no explanation has been provided.

That's either because Jesus didn't give one or because Matthew didn't record it for us. And in a way, I wish he had. But in another way, it causes us to dig into the riches of the scriptures, which is actually beneficial.

So let's read Matthew 13, verses 44 to 46. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls.

And upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. And so one can imagine that if that was spoken to a crowd of unbelieving people that had just rejected Christ and weren't really paying too much attention to him, they would have thought, what on earth is that all about?

Unfortunately, the modern church has largely done the same with these, because in the absence of a good dig through the Old Testament, what they've done is made up an explanation that sounds plausible when you first hear it, but in actual fact, it doesn't take you long to realise it's far from right.

[6 : 24] Before I move on to that, I just want to draw attention to that word in the beginning of verse 45, the word again, which could be said, and in addition, or consider this as well, and that is the reason I'm doing these two parables together, because there is obviously a link.

They're supposed to be linked. And that is the source of some of the error, because lots of people teach this as if both parables carry an identical message.

But there is a very important distinction between these two parables, even though they do seem to carry the same message. So, the typical way this is taught is to say that the parable of the hidden treasure is one in which the sinner finds Christ.

And so, the sinner who is digging in the field, which implies searching for the Lord, finds Christ, and for him that is a hidden treasure, and he hides it, and treasures it in that way, he hides it.

Similarly, the parable of the pearl of great price is often taken to mean that the sinner who finds Jesus has found the pearl of great price.

[7 : 54] As you say, as I've said, it's kind of plausible. But there are some problems. Scripturally, there are problems with that. A sinner searching and digging in the field to find Christ.

Or another translation suggests that it's digging in God's word to find the meaning of the gospel, as if the gospel is not written plainly on the pages of the New Testament, and the Old Testament for that matter.

The problems are many, but a couple of them are as follows. Romans tells us that there is none who seek after God, that man doesn't go looking for God, actually God goes looking for us.

God chases us down. There is no natural propensity in sinful man to search out God. So God comes knocking on our door.

And if necessary, and for me it was certainly necessary, creates absolute chaos in your life until you go, Oh God! And then, he finds you.

[9 : 08] So there isn't really, it's not a credible solution. Now the other thing is, when you think of the pearl of great price, it speaks then of the sinner spending all he has in order to obtain salvation.

But we have not spent all we have to get saved. And if we had, and think of it, apply it too to the parable of the hidden treasure, it speaks of the sinner who goes digging in the field to unearth salvation.

So this is salvation by works, is it not? Which the Bible speaks specifically against. In Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 8, we read that salvation is a gift from God.

Not through works, lest any of us should boast. So, these things that sound plausible, and they appear to be giving glory to God, and mostly these teachings are done in some innocence, where some poor beleaguered pastor feels that he's got to find an answer to these things and present it to his congregation in a way that edifies them and lifts up the name of Jesus.

So it's sincerely wrong, if you like, rather than being deliberately deceitful. And I tremble as I say it, but pastors should not get up here and talk unless they've studied their Bible, and unless they're prepared to be diligent students of the Bible going forward.

[10 : 43] Anything you think you know must be questioned every time you preach, which is why preparing sermons takes so long, because you think you know it, and then you start to read it, and you think, actually, there are gaps in my knowledge.

So I'm going to make a statement, and then I'm going to hopefully back it up. I believe the hidden treasure is faithful Israel, and I believe the pearl of great price is the faithful church.

Now, having said that, you think, well, how do you get that from the treasure hidden in the field? And we've got to be consistent in our translation.

And up to now, we've already discovered that the main actor in all of these parables is Jesus. Jesus was the sower. Jesus planted the mustard seed.

Jesus was the one who sorted out how they would deal with the wheat and the tares. It's always a divine actor, not just a man.

[11 : 49] But where the scripture refers to a person in these parables, it's the actions, the divine actions of the Lord Jesus himself. So the man digging in the field has to be Jesus.

Otherwise, we have inconsistency across parables, and it becomes confusing. So if the man digging in the field is Jesus, then how do we then realise that the treasure that he found is faithful Israel?

Well, we know from previous parables, if you remember, earlier on, the field was described as the world.

It's in the explanation of the tares. So verse 38 of Matthew 13. Start the sentence in verse 37. The one who sows the good seed is the son of man.

That's how we know that Jesus is the main actor. And the field is the world. So, if the field is the world, you've got the whole world, and yet in that whole world, this treasure is found.

[13 : 06] But how do we know that that refers to Israel? Whenever Israel is spoken of, first of all, the church is never, ever referred to. And lots of preachers think that the treasure in the field is the church.

But it isn't. It's Israel. But not just Israel the place, but faithful Israel. In other words, faithful Jews. The corporate body of faithful Jews, which, as we know from previous studies, and from studies of Revelation, there will be a day when all Israel is saved.

And it's that faithful chunk of Israel that will one day represent the all Israel that is saved. But when you see references, let's turn to Exodus 19.

And we have to sort of forgive Bible translators a little bit, because they've put a slant on this that isn't helpful in this particular study.

But Exodus 19 is where Moses is on Mount Sinai. And in verse 4, God speaks to Moses.

[14 : 22] And he says, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession among the peoples, for all the earth is mine.

So, God here is speaking of the whole earth, the field. And he's saying to Israel, You will be my own possession. Do any of you have an old King James?

And special treasure is the accurate translation. The word used in Hebrew is the word segula. I don't know if that's the right pronunciation. King James translates this as My own peculiar treasure or special treasure, depending on whether you've got the new King James or the old.

And God refers to Israel as his special treasure or peculiar treasure. If you turn to Deuteronomy 14, in verse 2, God speaks to the Jews, to Israel, for you are a holy people to the Lord your God.

And the Lord has chosen you to be a people of his own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. So, his own possession is that same word segula and it means he has chosen you to be his own special treasure.

[16 : 01] So, referring to treasure fits far more with Israel than it does with the church. And it certainly, the whole passage so far, I hope you'll agree, does not fit with unsaved people rooting out and trying to find salvation.

It's actually God who's rooting out trying to find his special treasure. If we also look at Psalm 135, I always think where things are mentioned more than once, it gives us a particular remit to take it very seriously.

Psalm 135 and verse 4. For the Lord has chosen Jacob, no, Jacob was the man whose name was changed to Israel.

So, for the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel for his own possession, segula, again, his own special treasure. He has chosen Israel as his own special treasure.

So, we have this period of time that we're in as we read this bit of Matthew's Gospel which is a point at which the treasure is definitely hidden.

[17 : 21] I mean, they want to kill their Messiah. They're not taking the oracles of God to the world. In fact, the religious priests have turned it all into terrible corruption and they've rejected their Messiah.

But that's not where the hiddenness began. One could argue that the hiddenness began when the north and the south tribes were taken into captivity.

One lot into Babylon, the other into Assyria. And so, you have Israel that was a world power, had a king, were wealthy, were obviously blessed of God and when you read through the Old Testament you read passages where it says all their enemies were terrified of them.

They weren't always the biggest in number but they always won and it was recognised that their God was with them. And people feared Israel because they feared Israel's God.

And then they upset God because they would not behave righteously and they got off into idolatry and started getting involved in all the things that the other pagan nations got involved in including child sacrifice and the like.

[18 : 35] and so, they were put into captivity and at that point they ceased to be a world power and they ceased to have a king. And so, the Israel that's come through hundreds of years right up to the time about which we are reading was an Israel that had no king and had no international clout.

they weren't a feared nation. In fact, for the whole of those hundreds of years they lived under the thumb of Gentile nations. They became hidden as a treasure of God.

And so, the hidden treasure fits Israel. It doesn't fit anyone else really. Some other things that it's worth noting.

Israel's high priest wore an ephod which was kind of a square piece of his priestly garment.

Now, the priestly garment itself was full of gold, gold thread. But particularly, the ephod had jewels on it, treasure.

[19 : 50] And each jewel represented a tribe of Israel. So, not only was God saying they're my special treasure, but they were represented as treasure outwardly in the garments of the priest.

So, there is this connection in the eyes of God between Israel and treasure. But none of those precious stones in the ephod were pearls.

And I can't remember what all of them were. We'll read it in a minute. But each one represented one of the sons of Israel. And corporately, that ephod represented the whole of Israel.

It's amazing, isn't it? How God brings together in his scripture the things that he loves and puts it there for us to find. And it is the privilege of God to hide a matter and it's the privilege of man to search out that matter.

And I find it moving. That he has taken the trouble to make it accessible to those who believe. We're going to come later to the pearls and that's fascinating too.

[21 : 06] So Jesus comes to the earth, the field, and uncovers his special treasure. And he did it the first time and then he hid it again and it has remained hidden.

Now we might say, well, Israel isn't hidden now because it's been re-established as a nation. Yes, it has, but it's not been restored to its international dominance and it's not been restored to the nations of the earth are not saying, wow, God's with Israel and we need to go to Israel if we want to find out about God.

That situation has not yet been restored. Well, I think it's in Isaiah 14 and I hadn't put this in my notes, but in Isaiah 14 I believe it says, that when it's prophesying about the future, the still yet future of Israel, it says ten men will take the hand of a Jew and will say we have heard that God is with you.

How anyone can embrace the idea that God has abandoned Israel is beyond me. There is so much yet to be fulfilled. Israel is one of Israel.

One of which is that the world will again take hold of the hand of a Jew. Actually, it says it will grab his cloak. It will grab hold of the cloak of a passing Jew and say, take me to your God.

[22 : 34] We've heard that God is with you. We want to know this God. That is yet to be fulfilled. But at present, in terms of the treasure of God, it's still hidden.

Now, we know that we must be close to the revealing of Israel as God's treasure because they're back in the land. And they've been re-established miraculously as a nation and their ancient languages come with them.

It's never happened to any other nation on the face of the earth. Israel is restored to the land, although still in sin and still not in fellowship with their God. God. But that latter translation to being in fellowship with God is yet to come.

And it was to Israel when he came that he made the offer of the kingdom, saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and they rejected the offer.

So they could have been revealed at Jesus' first coming, but they weren't because they rejected their king. And we read in scripture that they won't be revealed, and their king will not sit on the throne until they say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

[23 : 51] Baruch Abba Hashem Adonai. They will not have their king until they recognize him as king. And that's the point at which we will see that treasure once again unearthed and set on display.

The events in Matthew 12 happened and Jesus said that sin cannot be forgiven or will not be forgiven. I think Joe had it right when he said it's not that the sin was unforgivable, it's that the Lord said he would not forgive it.

And so that generation lost position and over the next 40 to 70 years they disappeared as a nation. They were kind of doubly hidden.

You could go to Israel just before the First World War, you could go to Israel and it was desolate. People didn't even really live there and certainly the ones that did live there weren't Jews apart from the odd one or two.

But there was no nation of Israel until 1948. And it was the Balfour Declaration that set the political situation in place for Israel to re-exist as a nation, but it still didn't happen to 1948.

[25 : 08] And even now they don't have all the land that they should have had as a result of the Balfour Declaration. They've got this tiny postage stamp surrounded by massive nations who hate them and yet they survive.

I can't think why that is, can you? So they were scattered far and wide in what we call the diaspora. They were all over the world.

They were no longer a nation. Little enclaves of Jews in various cities of the world. And since 1948 they've been slowly coming back to the land. So they still abide today under a curse.

A curse that will be lifted when they say Baruch Abba Hashem Adonai! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Lord, we recognise you. You're the Messiah.

The prophet Zechariah writes about it and says, they will look upon me whom they have pierced and mourn as if for an only son. There will be that day of recognition, that day that says, oh my goodness, did we blow it.

[26 : 16] So what about this statement that he bought the whole field? He didn't just buy Israel, he bought the whole field. We know that the field, according to previous parables, is the world.

So he bought the whole world that contained his special treasure. And he sold everything he had to acquire it. How does this apply to Jesus?

I'm thinking I probably don't need to say an awful lot about this, but I'm going to in case somebody here doesn't understand it, and also people might listen online to these talks.

So we'll rehearse it again. Jesus paid for the salvation of the Jewish nation with his life. In Matthew 1 verse 21, it says he came to save his people, the Jews, from their sins.

So first and foremost he was trying to save the Jews, but in 1 John 2 verse 2 we read he died for the sins of the whole world. So in saving the Jews, he saved all of us.

[27 : 29] And as to it costing him everything, I'm going to use the model, and you can go away and read this because I haven't got time to do it as a study, but the Levitical high priest at the Feast of Atonement is a picture of Christ, and you can look back, if you look back far enough we've got sermons on this, but the Levitical high priest dressed in garments that today would cost you millions.

He was surrounded by the most opulent riches you could imagine. The cloth was expensive cloth, it was heavy cloth, it had gold threads running through it, it was bedecked with jewels on the ephod and on the shoulder, the epaulets.

He wore a gold I'll call it a crown, it wasn't a crown actually, but it was a bit like when you see bishops in the Church of England put on a mitre, it was that sort of garment that marked him out as a priest, but it was made of gold.

Everything about his dress, the bells on the bottom of his robe were silver. This was hugely costly and it wasn't to show off how opulent he was, it was to show the regal majesty of the priest who was yet to come, our great high priest as Hebrews calls him.

And when it came to dealing with the sin of the people, the priest would, prior to going in and doing the thing with the blood of the goat and then doing the thing with the scapegoat, what he would do is he would take off all those garments.

[29 : 23] So he would effectively strip down to his underwear and so when he went in to represent the people he didn't look at all regal. He looked as if he was poverty stricken.

He looked as if he had come from no special place whatsoever. As the priest he looked as if he'd come from heaven. As the priest on the day of atonement he looked as if he'd never been anywhere near heaven.

And he went in and he performed the sacrifices as this sub-ordinary human being. And then once the sacrifices had been completed he came back out and he went through ceremonial washings and he then put those garments back on which is a representation of his return to heaven.

The ascension, the resurrection and the ascension. But the point is there was nothing he didn't give up. Every single thing that was his was set aside so that he could buy the field and as we'll find out in a minute the pearl of great price.

So I think it's Philippians, Philippians 2 and I'm going to start reading at the beginning of the chapter because it sets the scene of what Paul was trying to teach and I think Paul was trying to teach this concept.

[30 : 50] Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the spirit, if any affection and compassion make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose, do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves.

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests but for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. I will pause there for a moment.

The exhortation is treat other people the way Jesus would treat other people. How did Jesus treat other people? We read on.

God who although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped but emptied himself taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of men.

Get rid of all the priestly robes, get rid of, imagine coming from the riches of heaven where there is no sin, where there is full righteousness, where there are streets of gold and if there are buildings there they would have been amazing buildings and they all belong to you and you step out of all that into this cruddy place that is full of sin, why?

[32 : 19] Why would you do that? Why did he do that? Because he loved us. What powerful love is that and how much do we overlook it that he gave so much, gave up so much.

We sing the song don't we, you laid aside your majesty. But how real is that to us that we appreciate that he left the most idyllic place imaginable, even beyond what we can imagine, to step into this sinful, falling apart, corrupt, manipulative place for our sake.

Let's read on. Verse 7, but he emptied himself, taking the form of a bond servant and being made in the likeness of men. Not only men, but men in their underwear it seems from the feast of atonement.

Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. I'm reminded that during the crucifixion, when Malchus' ear got chopped off by Peter, he put the ear back on and he said, do you not know that I could call legions of angels to deliver me from this hour?

He went through it because of obedience and because of love, not because, you know, the story goes about, oh, they arrested him and killed him. He let them. When they all came to arrest him, the Bible tells us they all fell flat on their backs, which I always think is hilarious.

[33 : 57] You know, crash. Sorry, did you have something to say? Oh, you want to arrest me? Well, get up then. I mean, he volunteered to do this for us.

Verse 9, for this reason also God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Hallelujah, I say. But in doing that, we know, we read in 1 John 2, verse 2 that he paid for the sins of the whole world, which included his precious treasure.

treasure but wasn't limited to his precious treasure. The parable also implies that he will come again and that's an implication that's often missed.

But currently the treasure is buried, slightly more shallowly than it was, but it's still buried. and it says he's going to dig it up and take it to himself again.

[35 : 18] So the implication is he's got to come back to do that. So it's another verse that makes the second coming a certainty. So I think at that point we should move on to the pearl of great price.

Why would we consider the pearl of great price the faithful church? Now we know the sins paid for, so he's paid the price. And if we are the pearl of great price, he's paid for it in the same sacrifice that bought the Jews, he's bought us with it.

But why a pearl? None of the other jewels included a pearl. The pearls, pearls certainly in that day were incredibly valuable.

There's a story of Cleopatra showing how well off she was by dissolving one of her pearls in a glass of wine and then drinking it. And it was her way of showing just how rich she was.

But these were worth vast amounts. A single pearl sold would pay for a massive feast, for example. In today's money, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of pounds.

[36 : 28] So in the Bible, the nations were referred to, and the nations is a synonym for the Gentiles, were referred to as the sea.

If you turn to, because I'm short of time, I will just turn to one reference, Revelation 17. And there are other references where the Gentile nations are referred to as the sea.

The beast, for instance, rises from the sea, and it's from the sea of humanity. Revelation 17 and verse 15, we read, when the scripture is kind of explaining itself, or it's an angel actually explaining the scriptures, and he said to me, the waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

So the sea or the waters represent nations, what does it say? Multitudes and nations and tongues. People, people other than Jews are represented by large bodies of water.

So the pearl is the only precious stone that grows in the sea. I don't know if you're aware of how we get pearls, but the clam or the oyster swallows something horrible like a stone or a piece of grit or sand and it injures the oyster and the oyster's response to that injury or wound is to coat it with a substance called dacre and it coats it to render it harmless.

[38 : 17] And so it doesn't reject the grit or the foreign body or the source of injury, it doesn't reject the source of injury, it covers it and renders it harmless.

And of course we have wounded him with our sin. He was wounded for our transgressions but that means our transgressions caused him to be wounded.

But what has he done with our transgressions? Well for the time being anyway he has covered them so we walk in his righteousness now even though we don't deserve it. The injury, the wounding that our sin has done to him has for the moment been covered.

And what he's saying is the kingdom of heaven is like this pearl of incredible value and that pearl of incredible value is us and it often doesn't cross our minds particularly when we're having a go at one another or hurting one another that we are injuring those who are incredibly valuable to God.

But every single one of us. I have heard this taught by the way that the pearl of great price is salvation for every person. That each person is a pearl of great price. And there is some truth in that but the scripture doesn't refer to individuals it refers to the pearl meaning the church the corporate body of believers who constitute that irritant that wounded him which he has now covered and treasures and spends everything he can to get back.

[39 : 53] Let me shortcut to the end a bit. Revelation 21 Revelation 21 verse 10 What we're reading now is the culmination of it all where it all finishes up and you remember we read in previous weeks that Jesus has amalgamated believers from Israel and from the church and created the one new man.

So verse 10 chapter 21 verse 10 and he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God having the glory of God her brilliance was like a very costly stone as a stone of crystal clear jasper.

It had a great high wall with twelve gates and at the twelve gates angels and names were written on them which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

So we have God's great treasure and their names written. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west and the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones and on them were written the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The twelve apostles were the ones who founded the church. So the church, the pearl of great price, exists because of the work of the apostles which are now the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem and the names of the sons of Jacob are written there on the gates.

[41 : 31] The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square. If you've got an old King James it will say it is laid out four square and its length is as great as its width and he measured the city with the rod fifteen hundred miles in its length and width and height.

They're all equal. And I want to jump down to verse 19. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was Jasper, the second Sapphire, the third Chalcedony, the fourth Emerald, the fifth Sardonyx, the sixth Sardius, the seventh Chrysalite, the eighth Beryl and the ninth Topaz, the tenth Chrysoprase, the eleventh Jacinth and the twelfth Amethyst.

They are all the same stones that are in the ephod. So the symbolism carries through from the Old Testament right through to what is yet future, that the foundation stones of God's city are going to be his special treasure.

And when you think of a whole foundation stone of precious stone, that is a lot of worth. And I believe it's written as it is, not because God holds precious stones in great worth, but as a way of us understanding the phenomenal worth he places on Israel.

And similarly with the gates, we will read on. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold like transparent glass.

[43 : 11] Each gate, now remember the gate is how you get in. How do you get into the kingdom of God right now? Because the church preaches you, hopefully, the gospel, but you respond to the gospel, you finish up in the church.

You're part of the gate, you're part of the way in. Is that not wonderful? I try to imagine the size of the oyster that would produce a city gate that consists of a single pearl.

I'm going to shut up, I've spoken for long enough. There are other scripture references in the notes. But Jesus gave everything, everything, nothing left, walked away from the Father, walked away from the riches, walked away from the beauty, walked away from utter, complete righteousness and into sin and depravity and horrific circumstances for one reason and one reason only, he loved us.

God bless you.